













# The Exodiad

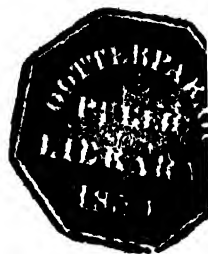
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## THE EXODIAD.

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### BOOK THE FIRST.

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OF Israel, by Jehovah's mighty power  
From long captivity redeem'd, with loss  
And total overthrow of Egypt's host,  
What time the chosen servant of the Lord  
From Goshen to the land of promise led  
Through the divided sea the ransom'd tribes,  
Sing, heavenly Muse, and prop those mortal powers,  
Which but for thy sustaining aid must sink  
Under the weight of argument so vast,  
Scenes so majestic, subject so sublime.

Now to the desert from the Red Sea shore  
Th' emancipated armies of the Lord,  
Safe from pursuit, had pass'd ; there stopp'd and turn'd,  
And lo ! what late was land had now become  
A trackless waste of waters, welming down  
With hideous roar into the boiling gulph.  
There as they stood in contemplation rapt  
Of the tremendous scene, whilst every wave,  
That surg'd upon the beach, aloud proclaim'd  
The witnest miracle, their conscious hearts  
Now gave the praise to God ; for all had pass'd  
Through the disparted sea, to them a wall,  
To harden'd Pharaoh an impending pile  
Of cataracts, in whose profound abyss  
He and his thousands were for ever sunk,  
Save what the indignant billows toss'd on shore  
From wreck of chariots, spears and glittering arms ;  
Memorials of that pomp and proud array,  
Wherein of late confiding they aspir'd  
To snatch a victory in despite of Heav'n,

And those portentous signs so oft display'd  
Of an approaching vengeance, now complete.

While thus the rescu'd multitude was spread  
From the sea-margin to the sandy plain  
Of Etham, where the wilderness began,  
Moses, who saw that order now would gain  
A prompt obedience, straightway gave the word,  
That on the signal every tribe should form  
Under its special chieftain, and present  
To the four points a regulated front.  
Whereat the trumpet sounded forth the charge  
For preparation : instant in his post  
Each cited leader stood, and, whilst his eye  
Observant rang'd along the far-stretcht line,  
Marshall'd the shapely phalanx. Nahshon here,  
Chief of the sons of Judah, led the van,  
And rear'd his glittering standard in the east.  
Next in succession Issachar's bold tribe  
In varied arms were seen, and them beside  
Eliab, chief of Zebulun, dispos'd

His harness'd warriors in well-order'd files.  
Resplendent floated in the mid-day sun  
Reuben's rich banner, by the hand unfurl'd  
Of sage Elizur ; Simeon's tribe, to them  
Adjunct, nor less with martial zeal inspir'd,  
Led by Shelumiel stood : these with the sons  
Of Gad, who own'd Eliasaph's command,  
The southern front compos'd.—Upon the west,  
Arm'd at all points, Elishama display'd  
The strength of Ephraim ; loud was heard his voice,  
High in command, for all the warrior's fire,  
Ambition and the ardent love of fame  
Glow'd in his generous breast ; there too was seen  
Gamaliel ; him, for eloquence renown'd,  
And wise and brave, Manasseh's tribe obey'd ;  
Abidan last, of Benjamin the chief,  
Form'd on the left, and clos'd the western front.—  
Fac'd to the north Ahiezer unfurl'd  
Dan's warlike ensign ; he, with Asher's band,  
O'er whom presided Pagiel, and the force

Of Naphtali, entrusted to the charge  
Of brave Ahira, squar'd the mighty host  
Of chosen warriors at all points entire.

    This done, the minister elect of God,  
With Aaron, elder of the sacred tribe,  
And Joshua, then in Nature's youthful prime,  
Approach'd and stood at gaze. The distant sound  
Of timbrels, swelling with the breeze, announc'd  
The choral train of Miriam. Silent stood  
The host four-fronted, covering all the plain,  
More than six hundred thousand men at arms.  
When now as Moses from his station view'd  
The army of Jehovah thus drawn out,  
And heard their numbers, the consoling thought  
That these were yet selected from a world,  
Sunk in idolatry, to serve their God  
With holy worship, and confess his name,  
Fill'd his meek heart with joy ; to Heav'n he rais'd  
His eyes with tears of thankfulness suffus'd,  
And as his soul fresh inspiration felt,



Thus in unstudied phrase his rapture flow'd.

“ To God, ye sons of Israel, to the Lord  
Of Heav'n all-gracious, let your choral hymn  
Ascend, triumphant in his glorious name.

In Him we live ; his mercy is our stay,  
His strength is our salvation. O'er the east  
When day's bright herald spreads his rising beams,  
Let early hallelujahs hail the morn ;

• And when in his meridian throne he sits  
Incumbent o'er th' unshadow'd earth, and sheds  
Intolerable brightness, not to him,  
But to th' Almighty Power, who with a word  
Can quench his flaming orb, direct your praise.  
At morning-break, at noon sing to the Lord ;  
At evening-fall to Him, who gives you rest,  
Lift up your hearts ; for He alone is God,  
The God of battles. In the sea he cast  
The horse and his proud rider ; all are lost,  
Beneath the closing billows sunk in death,  
The deep abyss o'ershadows them, the caves

Of ocean hide them. Thy right hand, O Lord,  
Arm'd with omnipotence, hath overthrown  
The impious legions, which provok'd thy wrath,  
Unaw'd by wonders in their sight display'd.  
Ye sons of Jacob, heard ye not the foe  
With loud voice vaunting his superior might?  
I will pursue, he cried, I will o'ertake;  
I will divide the spoil; on Israel's tribes  
I will discharge my fury. Where is now  
This conqu'ror, this despoiler? Down at once,  
Down rush'd the heav'n-arrested flood, and swept  
In thund'ring torrents him and all his host.  
Where is the boaster now? The eddying waves  
Boom o'er his sinking head, whilst in the spray  
The flitting sea-fowl dips her wings, and screams  
Exulting in the storm: but we the whilst,  
God of our fathers! we, who in thy strength  
Confide and are thy people, we, who know  
It was thy hand that led us through the sea,  
Can view this wreck of nature undismay'd,

And nothing doubting still pursue our march  
Over this savage wild, rocks pil'd on rocks,  
Where vegetation never yet had life.  
Ye men of Israel, God is our defence ;  
Under the covering of his cloud we came,  
Under his providence we will advance.  
Though all the barbarous hordes of Esau's race  
League to oppose us, victory must be ours ;  
For who shall stand before the Lord, whose wrath  
Is a consuming fire ? Methinks I see  
The plains of Palestine bestrew'd with slain,  
The tents of Edom shake, the mighty chiefs  
Of Moab crouch for fear, and all the kings  
Of Canaan, all her idols and their groves  
Bow to the dust, wither and melt away,  
If but the breath of God's displeasure smites  
Their death-devoted armies : ye, the sons  
Of promise, faithful if ye still abide  
The hour, that ends your trial and your toil,  
Shall find that happy land, where Nature's stores,

Oil, milk and honey, as in rivers flow,  
And in the city of your God repose."

He ceas'd, when instantly th' approving shout  
Of thousands rent the air ; through all the host,  
Along each front, the pealing thunder roll'd.  
The joyous plaudits, that at once bespake  
Their faith and their obedience, cheer'd the heart  
Of the meek prophet ; for he rightly gave  
Not to himself, but to his God, the praise ;  
Therefore thrice welcome to his ear their zeal,  
Vouch'd with this loud acclaim. And now behold !  
Miriam, of sacred minstrels the supreme.  
Eager she came to hymn the praise of God  
For his deliverance vouchsaf'd, her soul  
Full of the glorious theme. Aloft she rear'd  
Her well-brac'd cymbal ; at the sight whercof  
The hum of voices and the clash of spears  
Ceas'd, and the whole assembled army stood,  
As if spell-stricken, motionless as death.  
High-rais'd above the choir, with out-spread hand

Prepar'd to strike, the mighty mistress stood :  
When as the loud prelusive note was heard,  
(Signal to all her train, that now began  
The sacred harmony) forth burst at once  
'Their swelling voices, tunable, but loud  
As thunder, rolling o'er the desert plain  
To the horizon, where the distant rocks  
Echo'd Jehovah's name ; nor was the dance,  
(Then holy deem'd, now sensual and impure)  
Idle the whilst, but still with measur'd step  
Accordant to the strain, the graceful band  
Of damsels mov'd along the army's front :  
There onward as they pass'd from tribe to tribe,  
Loud was the shout, and glittering-bright the flash  
Of spears and swords high-waving, till at length  
The distant sounds, no more distinctly heard,  
At intervals arose, then died away,  
And deep impressive silence reign'd around.

So when the night's dominion mild prevails,  
Some watchful shepherd, as he tends his flock

On the broad summit of the grassy downs,  
That overhang the ocean, far beneath  
Surveys the ebbing tide, and marks the waves,  
As silver'd by the moon's pale beam they roll  
Upon the pebbly shore ; each, as it heaves,  
In due succession tow'rds the deep retires,  
Breaking with lessen'd force upon the beach,  
Till, as they tend to their remoter bound,  
Their murm'rings scarcely strike his list'ningear ;  
He, wrapt in pensiveness and thought profound,  
Feels o'er his soul a solemn awe transfus'd.

Now to the station, where the white-rob'd seer  
Conspicuous stood, the anxious chieftains throng'd,  
If haply they might learn from him, who spake  
The dictates of Jehovah, whither next  
To point their destin'd march. Before them lay  
A hideous and interminable wild,  
How far unlike to those luxuriant plains,  
O'er which the Nile majestically pours  
His fertilizing flood. There, when he ebbs,

Propitious harvests crown the liberal year ;  
The luscious grape hangs clust'ring from the vine,  
And flocks and herds unnumber'd graze his banks :  
There all was plenty, here on every side  
Gaunt Famine star'd ; bare in the scorching sun  
Parcht Nature panted ; no luxuriant grove  
Spread out its hospitable shade, no dew,  
No fount irriguous through the channel'd soil  
Offer'd one drop to slake the burning thirst  
Of the spent traveller ; to th' utmost verge  
Of the horizon, far as eye could reach,  
All seem'd one level sheet of parching sand,  
Save where at intervals the eddy winds  
Had pil'd it into hills, pregnant with death,  
When the next sweeping blast might tear them up  
In suffocating clouds : here might be seen  
The solitary ostrich, pilgrim-like,  
Pacing the dreary waste, her nest bequeath'd,  
Erratic bird, to the life-giving sun :  
Here if the spilh of blood from man or beast

Tainted the air, the vulture hovering high  
Fann'd her resounding wings, and with loud scream  
Call'd her rapacious brood to share the feast :  
In every blast the voice of death was heard ;  
The gaunt wolf's howl, the shrill hyæna's cry,  
And savage growlings of the hungry pard.

These, and worse scenes of terror and dismay,  
Which sick'ning fancy drew whilst Israel's chiefs  
Ponder'd the miseries of their destin'd march,  
Palsied their nerves with fear ; the joyous shouts,  
That had arous'd their courage, now had ceas'd  
And died upon the ear ; Heav'n had withdrawn  
The cloud bifronted ; happy had it been,  
If still that cloud might cover from their view  
The terrors, that enclos'd them. In their front  
The pathless wilderness ; behind them roll'd  
A threat'ning gulph, forbidding all retreat,  
Once pass'd, but never to be tempted more.  
Where should they turn for comfort ? Here they saw  
Of age and infancy a helpless throng ;



Son, husband, father, all the strongest ties  
Tugg'd at their hearts : faith could not stand the shock.  
Whilst Moses prophecied and Miriam sung  
Songs of deliverance, the general shout  
Dispers'd those thoughts, that now when silence reign'd  
In deeper gloom revisited their minds.  
Doubts and perplexities, the stronger grown  
Because awhile forgotten, now resum'd  
Their influence, intermitted, but not lost.

    This Moses saw, and much was griev'd to find  
From evidence too clear how fast their minds  
Were veering to despair, for though like them  
No confidence he plac'd in human means,  
Yet not like them despair'd he of divine.  
On faith's firm rock his constancy was built ;  
To him the gloomy wilderness appear'd  
A theatre, whose horrors would set off  
With more magnificence the bright display  
Of future miracles. Before his tent,  
Full in the view of the assembled throng,

Whose murmurs drew him forth, the prophet stood.  
Sad was his visage, and his clouded brow  
Augur'd a mind disturb'd. Around he cast  
A look, that sunk into the hearts of some,  
Till now the foremost leaders of revolt ;  
But aw'd to silence, conscious and abash'd,  
Unable to abide his piercing eye,  
They slunk into the crowd. Awhile he paus'd,  
Prepar'd to hear and answer their appeal ;  
But all were husht, no bold declaimer yet  
Was found to broach complaint. At length with hand  
Uprais'd to claim attention, thus in tone  
Of sharp reproof, becoming his high trust  
As legate of Omnipotence, he spake.

“ Ye priests and elders, great is your offence,  
And deeply have ye sinn'd against the Lord,  
When thus ye stir his people to revolt.  
Are ye the teachers, the selected tribe,  
The consecrated guardians of our faith,  
Masters in Israel ? Wherefore come ye here

With these deluded men to bay my ears  
With your complainings? Either now declare  
What are your doubts, or say what stronger proofs  
Your consciences require than ye have seen,  
Too lately seen to be so soon dismiss'd  
From your weak wavering minds. Why do ye keep  
Your eyes for ever dwelling on the scene  
Of that bare wilderness? Turn them behind,  
And view that sea, miraculously pass'd,  
Where thousands upon thousands are engulph'd,  
And unembalm'd the corpse of Pharaoh lies,  
His grave the sand, his monument the waves.  
If God made dry the waters for your sakes,  
What terrors in that desert do ye see,  
What obstacles too difficult, too vast  
For His Omnipotence? Did ye come forth  
By stealth from Egypt, or did God vouchsafe  
His visible effulgence to direct  
And light you on your way? Were ye not slaves?  
Are ye not free? If there your eyes beheld

A land of plenty, was that plenty yours ?  
No, 'twas an aggravation, that enhanc'd  
Your sorrows, and more bitter made the tears,  
With which ye wetted the coarse food, dealt out  
By your hard task-masters in scanty doles.  
What strange oblivion hath benumb'd your hearts ?  
Did ye not then, when misery press'd you down,  
When every sense was agoniz'd, and scorn  
And insult sharpen'd your oppressor's stroke,  
Did ye not then—? Yes, then ye cried to God,  
Then, when ye needed, ye confess'd his power,  
And sue'd for his salvation. He redeem'd  
He brought you forth ; the God of mercy saw  
The affliction of his people. Think ye then,  
That He, whose goodness rescu'd you, will now  
Leave you to perish in this barren wild ?  
No, where the lion finds his prey, the Lord,  
Who feeds his creatures, will provide for you.  
Beyond the desert lies the promis'd land.  
Will Nature's God, who throws this trackless waste

Betwixt your hope and you, erect a mound  
To bar his purpose and affront his power?  
Persist, and ye succeed. Dismiss your fears :  
These trials are ordain'd to prove your faith ;  
By faith ye conquer, conqu'ring ye obtain  
All that your souls can covet or desire.  
Ye serve the living God. If nature fail,  
And famine threaten, He, who made the worlds,  
Is your provider. What do ye discern  
In that dry wilderness, whereon ye look,  
Of aspect so terrific, which to attempt  
Appals your courage and confounds your faith?"

He said, nor added more, for now he saw  
The purpose of his argument attain'd,  
And other wish in his meek heart was none .  
But to convince and save. To Heav'n he rais'd  
An interceding look, and twice he pass'd  
His hand across his brow, as if to show,  
Should any trace of anger there be left,  
He will'd it to be gone. Beside him stood

Joshua, of leaders militant the chief,  
And ever as the prophet spake, his eye,  
Quick glancing on the recreant elders, mark'd  
The sympathetic fervour of his soul.  
And now, when Moses, as he clos'd his charge,  
Had call'd upon the armies to advance,  
The hero's zeal burst forth, and loud he cried—  
“ Comrades, and soldiers of the living God,  
Can ye hear this, and doubt ?” If more to add  
Were in his mind, the animating cry  
Of the assembled warriors, with one voice  
Vouching their firm allegiance to the Lord,  
Made fruitless the attempt, nor, as it seem'd,  
Was there occasion left for further speech  
To urge their duty, or dispel their fears.  
Still there was one so fatally possess'd  
With envy, rage, and disappointed pride,  
’Twere easier to persuade the famisht wolf  
To lick the hand, that robb’d him of his meal,  
Than turn to kindness his unfeeling heart.

Korah was he, a dark, obdurate man.  
Nor recollection of that self command,  
Which sacerdotal dignity should hold  
In public councils, nor the conscious sense  
Of time and opportunity unfit,  
Checkt his audacious tongue. In front he stood  
From forth the line levitical advanc'd,  
A rude ill-favour'd orator ; no grace  
Of action, utterance or external form,  
Nothing had he from nature to engage ;  
Shrill was his accent, and his cheek was ting'd  
With hectic spots of acrimonious red,  
Prognostics of the fever in his mind.  
Such Korah was, and thus, when all was hush,  
With preface self-approving he began.

“ That I, not less than these, who seem prepar'd  
T' applaud whatever desperation prompts,  
And rush upon destruction with a shout,  
Dare with unshaken constancy abide  
Those counsels, which pronounce upon the host

The sentence of inevitable death,  
None, knowing me, will doubt. Who, that with me  
Have shar'd our common sufferings, but will own,  
That I have stood unmov'd, whilst they have writh'd  
Under affliction's scourge? Heav'n can attest  
Oppression never could extort from me  
The gratifying tribute of a groan.  
When others wept and fruitlessly implor'd  
Forbearance, I on my tormentors smil'd,  
Scoff'd at their threats, and gave them curse for curse.  
I speak not this in vaunting, but in truth;  
It is my nature—so is Korah made.  
Had there been others temper'd of like stuff,  
We had not thus to tyrants giv'n our strength,  
'Till Slavery's fetters rusted on our limbs.  
And mark this truth—for what has truth to fear?  
We had not tamely crouch'd to the control  
Of one, who, flying from the common lot  
Of his poor countrymen to Midian's land,  
There dwelt, enjoying all that sweet repose,



Of which we never tasted—Nay, but hear—!  
'Tis true I speak of Moses, and I see  
You relish not the plainness of my speech ;  
What, then ? I draw my being from a source  
As patriarchal and as pure as his.  
But if your minds are levell'd to your lot,  
Enjoy your slavery, and let me be free.  
Yet 'twould be wise, methinks, and worth some pause,  
'To weigh the comforts, which his care provides  
To balance this surrender of your hearts.  
Scan them, compute them ; they are all in view,  
A vast amount—of comforts did I say ?  
No ; of privations an unbounded store,  
The whole fraternity of human plagues ;  
Famine, or drought, or pestilence, or sword,  
These and a thousand avenues besides,  
All leading to dishonorable graves,  
Are open to your choice, and our great chief,  
All-gracious, leaves you free on which to fix.  
In Egypt, though opprest, we yet had food ;

The breast, that fed the suckling, was not dried  
For lack of water : though our master's hand  
Bore hard upon us, yet from other ills  
With interested care he kept us free :  
As much of rest, as serv'd us to renew  
Our daily toil, he gave us, and at night  
Shelter'd our health from the inclement air.  
What now is our condition ? Hunger, thirst,  
Want, apprehension, nakedness, despair,  
These, like the serpents by the magic rod  
Of Moses conjur'd up, attend our march ;  
And he, who turn'd the waters into blood,  
Shall next incarnadine these desert sands,  
Whilst dogs and vultures hunt us on the track.  
But I have done ; for me it nought avails,  
Whether I here abide a few short days,  
Or whether, dragging on my toil-spent limbs,  
I seek some other melancholy spot,  
Whereon exhausted I may sink and die."

He ended ; when elastic as the bow,

By the strong archer drawn, and all as swift  
As his launch'd arrow, instantly behold !  
Joshua rush'd forth ; so sudden was the flash  
In the sun-beam reflected from his spear  
And lion-crested helm, so bold his mien,  
So dazzling bright his beauty, 'twas to sight  
As God had sent an armed angel down  
To light amongst them, and strike dumb the wretch,  
Who dar'd blaspheme his name : in burnisht mail  
Tow'ring he stood, and from beneath the arch  
Of his dark brow so fiery was the glance  
Of his fierce eye, so terrible his frown,  
Korah affrighted shrunk—" 'Tis well," he cried,  
And grasping shook his threat'ning spear the whilst,  
" 'Tis well thou'st sav'd thyself in time, and spar'd  
My hand the shame of spilling blood like thine.  
Live, and be scorn'd ! This weapon is reserv'd  
For worthier uses. Oh inglorious man,  
Alien from truth and born for Israel's shame !  
But that thine impious arrogant discourse

Proves that there is a man so grossly blind  
In understanding and in heart so hard,  
I would not have believ'd it. Strange it were,  
Had this defamer of the Lord been found  
A wretch forlorn, outcast of all the tribes,  
A moon-struck driv'ler; but it mocks belief,  
That one, upon whose hoary head we see  
The reverend stamp of age, should thus arraign  
The mercies of his God, and unappall'd  
Vaunt his bold blasphemies. And is it thou,  
Degenerate scion from the honour'd stock  
Of Izhar and of Kohath, righteous men,  
Is it thou, Korah, from whose lips we hear  
Words, that would draw an instant judgment down,  
If Moses, meekest of the sons of men,  
In mercy stay'd not the vindictive stroke?  
Atone, or thou art lost! Back to thy tent!  
Begone, we heed thee not, and neither wish  
To hear thy blasphemy, nor see thy doom."

He said, when Korah speechless turn'd aside,

Like that arch-enemy in after times  
Foil'd in the wilderness, and sought his tent  
With downcast look, confounded and abash'd ;  
For now in every threat'ning face he saw  
The storm of indignation, only check'd  
By presence of their Heav'n-commission'd seer,  
And knew his time to fly—" Begone !" they cried,  
As with one voice, " and hope not to implant  
Thy treacherous suspicions in our hearts—"   
He heard, but answer'd not. Moses the whilst,  
Whom Aaron now had join'd, prepar'd to speak.  
O'er his unruffled brow his silvery locks  
With grace majestic flow'd, and as his eye  
In pious rapture glanc'd the circle round,  
A smile of mild benevolence bespoke  
The patient calm composure of his soul,  
And thus at length he made his meek appeal.

" If I, who of myself possess no state,  
That Korah need to envy, have provok'd  
This accusation by a vain display

Of honours rashly sought, or proudly worn,  
Judge me, ye men of Israel! What am I,  
But a poor mortal, whom the Pow'r, that lays  
The yoke of this authority upon me,  
Ordains to bear it? How have I deserv'd  
This angry reprehension from a friend?  
Such I accounted Korah; near in blood,  
I held him near in heart. The sharp reproof,  
Dealt him by Joshua, did it spring from me,  
Or was it prompted by that generous zeal,  
That marks him out for future glories born?  
It was his own brave spirit urg'd him on  
To vindicate the mercies of his God.  
Silent I stood the whilst, and blush'd for him,  
Who blush'd not for himself: his hoary hairs  
Mov'd my weak heart to pity. Time hath been,  
And griev'd I am to think that time is past,  
When Korah's faith was loyal to his God.  
Wherefore this sad reverse? If what I am  
I am by God's decree, and what I speak

I speak not of myself, but as inspir'd  
By Him, whose voice I am, let Korah know,  
If he provoke rebellion in our tents,  
The cause is God's ; nor Joshua, nor I,  
But the Avenger will be God Himself.  
If Korah envy me, he envies cares,  
And sleepless nights and agitated days  
And mental terrors, more than heart of man,  
Unless by Heav'n supported, could endure.  
If he must envy, let his envy point  
At that serenity, that calm content,  
Which, in the bosom of domestic bliss,  
In Jethro's peaceful mansion I enjoy'd.  
I panted not for pow'r. God doth not choose  
The great ones of this world, but from the mean  
And lowly takes his ministers, to shew  
His wonders, and confound the pride of man.  
So was I sent to set the ransom'd free  
And lead his Israel forth, as servant should.  
When did I ever say—So Moses wills ?

Who ever heard me give commandment forth  
But in the name of God? There are, who know  
How God was pleas'd to manifest his will  
By my weak ministry, and they can say  
If or ambition mov'd me, or the hope  
Of vain supremacy.—I pause to hear  
If any can convict me of untruth.”  
Him answer'd Aaron thus—'Tis not enough  
That none of all here present will renew  
The railing accusation they have heard.  
Whilst aught remains untold, which it imports  
Thee, Moses, to declare and them to know.  
For who can tell how many they may be,  
'That have imbib'd the slander Korah broach'd,  
And think with him, though they conceal their thoughts?  
Therefore what apter time or stronger cause,  
Than now conspire, can urge thee to unfold  
The wond'rous revelation seen and heard  
Of thee in Horeb, which at once explains  
'Thine else mysterious mission, and confirms



Thy title to be trusted and obey'd  
As our deliverer, chosen of the Lord  
To work those miracles, that Egypt rues,  
And which, though all have witness'd, some dispute?  
Behold, on all the reverend elders round  
Attention sits, and, resting on their spears,  
The chiefs and captains silently await  
The awful promulgation of those truths,  
Which shall for ever fix their faith, and prove  
Thyself the servant, them the care of Heaven."

He said, nor did the pious seer refuse  
With his strong-urg'd injunction to comply;  
And thus in simple unaffected phrase,  
(The modest cloathing truth prefers to wear)  
With dignified composure he began.

" Ye know when holy Jacob and his sons,  
Our great forefathers, from their ancient seat  
Of Hebron to the land of Egypt came,  
Where Joseph, whom they sold, had favour found,  
And rul'd the realm in wisdom, they obtain'd

An heritage in Goshen, where their flocks  
Found ample pasture, and, as years roll'd on,  
Their numbers multiplied, their wealth increas'd,  
And all was peace and happiness around.  
There full of years in his descendants' arms  
The patriarch Jacob died, with his last breath  
Repeating God's assurance, that from him  
A mighty multitude should spring, to whom  
The fruitful land of Canaan was decreed.  
There, in his couch uprais'd, the dying seer  
Dealt his prophetic blessings to his sons,  
And ere the pulses of his heart had stopp'd,  
Straitly conjur'd them to inter his bones  
With Abraham and with Isaac in the cave  
Of Machpelah in Canaan. They, as bound,  
His strict command obey'd : Egypt embalm'd,  
But Canaan keeps his body ; there it rests,  
In pledge of the assurance giv'n by God,  
That we, like that, from Egypt should come forth,  
As at this day, to claim the promis'd land,

And where the father lies the sons should live.  
When Joseph died, and Israel's staff was broke,  
Egypt with jealous policy beheld,  
Not, as in Jacob's day, a simple horde  
Of shepherds, but a mighty people now  
Lodg'd in the very bosom of her realm :  
Suspicious and alarm'd, she straight devis'd  
Works of enormous magnitude and toil,  
To crush your spirit and exhaust your strength.  
Ye know how I was rear'd : I shar'd not then  
Your bondage ; I was free ; yet, when I saw  
The oppression of my countrymen, I seiz'd  
The vile Egyptian in the very act,  
And struck him dead to earth : the daring deed  
Was nois'd ; my life was forfeit, and I fled :  
Jethro receiv'd me ; at my suit bestow'd  
His daughter ; I, who other home had none,  
Paid him due service, and I kept his flock.  
Thus far at least your memories are with me,  
And all that I have told to all is known.

Now mark the rest, and, whilst I speak of things  
Mysterious, such as never yet to eye  
Or ear of mortal man have been divulg'd,  
Put faith into your hearts, and list to one,  
Who knows the peril, should he wrong the truth.

As o'er the desert to the hindmost tract  
I led my flock, to Horeb's mount I came.  
Silent was all around me ; far as sight  
Could stretch, a solitude profound appear'd.  
I felt as if, abstracted from the world,  
I were cut off from commerce with mankind ;  
A solemn horror o'er my senses crept.  
I would have pray'd, but as my soul aspir'd  
To give devotion vent, methought I felt  
A sudden impulse seize on all my powers,  
Compelling me in silence to await  
The revelation of some awful scene.  
I gaz'd upon the mount, whose craggy sides  
With trees and tangling bushes were entwin'd ;  
When lo ! at once I saw its lofty peak,

So bright but now, involv'd in sable clouds,  
Majestically rolling to its base,  
'Thro' which blue lightnings flash'd and thund'rings burst.  
Meantime, the desert in a furious blast  
Caught up, and driv'n in whirling eddies on,  
Seem'd as the elements of earth and air  
Conspiring rose to mingle in the wreck  
Of universal nature ; yet secure  
That not for me, an atom in the scale  
Of God's creation, this great stir was made,  
Silent I stood, pondering the awful scene.  
I felt no terror ; but as still my eyes  
Were fix'd upon the mount, which now appear'd  
To tremble from its base, as if inspir'd  
By feelings new and undefinable,  
My swelling heart with warm devotion glow'd.  
When lo ! direct in view a flaming bush  
With sudden splendor blaz'd ; the curling fire  
Now shot on high, now spread on every hand,  
Whilst in the midst entire the bush remain'd.

Kneeling and mute the prodigy I view'd,  
When from the centre of the flaming mass  
I heard a voice, that call'd me twice by name ;  
Obedient I replied ; again the voice  
Broke on my ear—' Approach not nigh, it criéd,  
Put off thy shoes, for holy is the ground,  
On which thou standest ; I, thy father's God,  
Now present speak to thee'—To earth I bow'd,  
And hid my face, to look on God afraid ;  
When thus the Lord—' Be sure that I have seen  
Th' affliction of my people, and am come  
To bring them forth from bondage, to a land  
With milk and honey flowing : thou art he,  
Whom I will send to Pharaoh to conduct  
From out of Egypt my redeemed host'—  
I, prostrate still, with fault'ring voice replied,  
' Almighty Lord, of what account am I,  
That I to Pharaoh's presence should repair,  
And do this wond'rous thing—?' Again the Lord—  
' I will be with thee, and upon this mount

Me shall ye worship, when I've brought you out—  
These gracious words my confidence renew'd,  
And thus I ventur'd to enquire of God—  
'Lord, when to Israel's children I shall come,  
And shall announce these tidings, should they ask  
Who is my sender, how shall I reply—?'  
Again from out the fire I heard a voice  
Distinct and awful—'Say, Jehovah sends thee,  
'That is my name, and in that name go forth,  
And with the elders say to Egypt's king,  
We are the servants of the living God,  
And He hath met us. Grant us now to go  
A journey of three days into the desert,  
'That we may sacrifice unto the Lord'—  
What need of more? I see before me those,  
Who join'd the suit, and witness'd the repulse.  
The miracles, that follow'd, all have seen;  
In them I had no part. God gave the word,  
Reveal'd his will, and arm'd my hand with power.  
Where is my boasting then? When He commands,

Who made the worlds, obedience is no praise.  
Now, I conjure you, ponder in your hearts  
What ye have heard. Nothing to me is due,  
For I am nothing worth, but to the Lord,  
The master whom I serve, to Him, who acts  
And speaks in me, your whole devotion pay."

He ceas'd, when deep revolving in their hearts  
The wond'rous revelation thus promulg'd  
With promise of deliverance, by the voice  
Of God Himself from out the fire avouch'd,  
Awe-struck the congregated princes stood.  
No Korah there was present; all were hush'd,  
Nor heed had they of witness to attest  
Their prophet's high authority : the sea,  
Between whose walled waters, by his rod  
Divided, they had pass'd, still roll'd in sight,  
And every wreck of Egypt's shatter'd host,  
That the disgorging billows cast on shore,  
Proclaim'd at once his triumph and his truth.  
Whereat with shouts, that made the air resound,



Burst forth their hymns of praise ; aloft they rais'd  
Tow'rds Heav'n their hands, as if with one consent  
Their vows of endless duty they renew'd ;  
And now as to the minister of God  
For their redemption they had bent the knee,  
Had he not check'd their purpose, and disclaiming  
That glory, which to God alone belong'd,  
Will'd them to give their praise where praise was due.  
Now to his inmost tent retir'd, alone,  
In curtain'd privacy with folded arms  
And head low-drooping o'er his aged breast,  
By rage, revenge and disappointment rackt,  
Korah desponding sate. The cherisht dream,  
That painted thousands leagu'ing in his cause,  
Had fled, and left his desolated heart  
Bare to the fangs of envy, which, bereft  
Of hope, that only could have stay'd its rage,  
More and more ravening and insatiate grew.  
Still floated in his sight the hateful scene,  
Where Moses circled by the elders stood ;

For memory still to every passion lends  
Her plastic tablets, and no tints are deep  
As those, which Envy's pallet can supply.  
Still in his ears the acrimonious taunts  
Of Joshua sounded, galling as the shout  
To the chaf'd panther, when, the hunter's spear  
Fixt in his side, he gnashes with the pain,  
And flying cow'rs into his lonesome den :  
So fled the Levite, stricken to the heart,  
Abasht, discomfited ; sighs deep and loud  
Burst from his lab'ring breast, hot tears bedew'd  
His rugged cheeks, but words none found their way,  
For none that language own'd could speak his pain.

Meantime behold ! returning from the host,  
His colleagues Dathan and Abiram came ;  
Hearts to his purpose fitted each possess'd,  
But with more covert policy and guile  
His malice each conceal'd—Abiram most.  
Ent'ring his tent they heard his frantic groans,  
And found him on the ground with desp'rate hands

Clench'd as in act to strip his hoary hairs.  
Awhile they stood, and scann'd him with a look,  
That augur'd less of pity than contempt ;  
Then, raising him from earth, thus Dathan spake.

“ What means this wild excess ? Art thou the man,  
Who lately with such confidence proclaim'd  
His calm endurance of adversity ?  
If with such causeless agonies you sink  
Under slight trials, how will you abide  
The inauspicious tidings that we bear  
Of worse reverses, how be arm'd to meet  
With steady resolution well-advis'd  
Your pow'rful rival, who, if not oppos'd,  
High o'er our heads by the applauding breath  
Of myriads blown, will scoff at our attempts ?”

With troubled aspect Korah thus replied.  
“ Dathan, what nature made me that I am,  
And, spite of your reproaches, such shall be.  
I do not boast that self-controlling art,  
By which the soul's strong impulses are mask'd,

Whilst underneath an hypocritic smile  
Hatred deep-rankling in the bosom lurks.  
For me, more honest though perchance less wise,  
When seen I'm known, when heard am understood.  
Others may hold their passions in reserve,  
And, like the embers on the peasant's hearth,  
Cover and keep alive the stifled spark,  
That glows unseen, till fit occasion serves  
To give its energies unbounded scope.  
The fire, that kindles in my heart, must flame ;  
And, if no other fuel it can find,  
On me its parent let its fury seize,  
And revel in the heart, that gives it birth.  
Away, 'tis vain, 'tis profitless to waste  
This tame appeal to patience upon me.  
I see my foe invested with command,  
I witness how the multitude confirm  
His proud dominion ; their applause of him,  
Their markt abhorrence and contempt of me,  
Still clamour in mine ears ; and dost thou talk

Of temperate counsels and procedure cool ?”

This said, on Dathan as he turn'd his eyes,  
He met a glance of such severe reproof,  
With indignation and contempt so charg'd,  
As struck him to the heart. “ Pardon, he cried ;  
I know thee, Dathan, for a plain blunt man,  
Who will not spare the weakness of a friend,  
And little careful how to chuse the times,  
When to enforce advice and when withhold ;  
But here is one hath studied that nice art,  
Of thee neglected. Let Abiram speak.”

“ Why should I speak, Abiram strait replied,  
To him, who will not hear, but wastes that time  
In weak lamentings, which, if well employ'd  
In prudent counsels, might ensure revenge ?”

“ Say'st thou revenge ? impetuous Korah cried ;  
Its very sound to my distemper'd soul  
Is consolation, harmony and health.  
Give me that healing hope, and I am calm.”

To whom Abiram—“ Prince, of that sage tribe,

Whose counsels all revere, must you be told  
Unless our plans by forethought are matur'd,  
Vigour is lost and expectation mockt ?  
It is the eye that gives the javelin aim,  
Without whose mark it does but beat the air ;  
So will it be with us, if in our course  
Discretion does not go before and guide.  
But what can your experience learn of me,  
Who am no son of Levi, nor of kin,  
As you, to Moses, who beneath the show  
Of meek demeanour bears that proud control,  
And boasts that high legation, which to shake,  
If such be Korah's purpose, well he knows  
Success was never gain'd by vain complaints,  
Or empty menaces, that harm not him,  
'Gainst whom they're vented, and betray themselves ?  
But you are calm—and well it is, for now  
Much it behoves us to compute the strength  
Of him, whose ruin we would work, of him,  
Who vaunts himself the legate of Jehovah,

And by that title keeps our souls in thrall  
And bondage worse than what our limbs endur'd  
Under the yoke of Pharaoh. We, your friends,  
Dathan and I were present and have heard  
This mighty orator proclaim aloud  
His great commission held of God Himself:  
Nay more, he told us, and unblushing told,  
That in the desert, when near Horeb's mount  
He watch'd the flock of Jethro, God appear'd  
In fire, and commun'd with him from the bush,  
That in the midst of flames was unconsum'd.  
Here is a prodigy, to him alone  
Reveal'd, which almost deifies the teller,  
Of none else seen and by none else affirm'd.  
If this were true, it makes him friend of God ;  
On this he founds his mission, and appeals  
To miracles in Pharaoh's presence wrought,  
Which, seen by thousands, thousands will attest.  
Believe me, son of Izrah, 'twere no task  
Of easy function to instil suspicion

Into the people's hearts, and shake their faith  
In him, who led them dry-shod through the sea."

" Why then do you persist, with eager speech  
Korah exclaim'd, why labour to adduce  
Fresh reasons for despair? I have enough,  
More than enough, and spurn that mean advice,  
Which counsels patience whilst it stifles hope."

" Not so, rejoin'd Abiram, nothing mov'd  
By Korah's idle wrath, that pass'd him by  
As would the babbling of a shallow stream,  
Not so, nor for such purpose am I come ;  
But in fair friendship zealous to devote  
Such humble faculties as I can boast  
To you and to your cause. Full well I know  
How prone to superstition are our tribes,  
And if on that foundation Moses builds,  
He builds on sandy ground his tott'ring power ;  
Nor less assur'd am I that they, who yield  
Their easy faith to legends without proof,  
And lend their ears to fables, that arrest



Their passions by surprise, will all as soon  
Veer to the next deceiver, and renounce  
For reasons light what lightly they believ'd.  
You are a son of Levi, and derive  
In like gradation of descent with Moses  
From Him, to whom the promises were giv'n.  
Where are they, you will ask—If they were giv'n  
To Abraham and his seed, why not to me  
Descends as full a portion of his blessing  
As of his blood? Why am I put aside,  
And why is Moses chosen? These are points  
For dealers in the Cabbala to solve;  
I am not quite prepar'd to contravene  
'Traditions long believ'd and holy deem'd,  
Therefore I wave my answer: this I know,  
'There is no fixt allegiance in the hearts  
Of these back-sliding people to their priest.  
Put back the curtains of your tent, and mark  
What dismal prospect opens from the east:  
There famine, drought and desolation reign,

There stalks the pestilence, and in the blast,  
Red with embowel'd fires, Death's arrows fly.  
Thither we march, there lies the promis'd land,  
But interposing death 'twixt us and it  
Cancels the promise. Now let Israel's host  
Pursue their march one day, but one short day,  
Across that sandy furnace, and ere night  
Mark if you do not find them on their knees  
To Egypt's idols: hunger will rebel,  
And men will laud the Gods, who guard a land,  
Where Peace resides, and Plenty spreads her stores:  
So will it be with us; in days foregone  
So was it with our fathers: Jacob's sons,  
Hard pinch'd with want, came begging to the doors  
Of Pharaoh, who for pity took them in,  
And little did their consciences revolt  
From food his priests had bless'd, and from abundance,  
His gods had granted, and their God withheld.  
Yes, strange it is, if Egypt's stocks and stones  
Are, as we say, no gods, that Nature's Lord,

Whom we adore and serve, should against us  
The chosen seed shut up the womb of earth,  
And open all her richest stores to them,  
Who render Him no praise, nor own his name.  
They were our task-masters, and we their slaves ;  
They worship brutish idols, we the Lord  
Of the whole world and all that it contains.  
Mark how our God distributes good and ill  
’Twixt us his followers and them, who kneel  
To deities irrational and dumb :  
They on the fruitful banks of Nile repose,  
We to the howling wilderness are driv’n ;  
They from the image of a horned calf  
Extort satiety, whilst, by our God  
Consign’d to thirst and hunger, we are left  
To starve on promises—I pause for words.”

“ And well thou may’st, blaspheming Dathan cried,  
For where can words be found to picture forth  
The horrors of our doom, lur’d as we are  
From fields of plenty into wastes of sand ?

Where is the man—I had almost said the god—  
Will find resources for to-morrow's wants ?  
Our flocks, our wives, our children and ourselves  
Without a miracle must die by thirst.  
Where is the pool—the river I should say—  
For source less copious hardly can appease  
This countless multitude ? Yet Moses cries,  
Go forth ; be stout ! The Lord will lead you on.  
To this I answer, will the Lord give water ?  
Behold, I faint ; how then can I go forth ?  
Thousands around me faint and die for thirst ;  
Will the Lord lead them on to rilling streams,  
Or can they drink the promise of your words,  
And quench the mortal fever that consumes them ?  
When we have kill'd our flocks my heart revolts  
From the tremendous question that occurs  
What next imperious hunger may demand.  
If day by day the prophet's power can work  
Successive miracles to feed the host,  
And strike out water where no water is,

The host will drink and eat till miracles,  
By frequency grown common, lose their name.  
If he, who bade the Red Sea stand on heaps,  
Can stay the rolling of the sandy waste,  
When the enrag'd tornado tears it up,  
Our sight will fare the better ; if his rod  
Can shade the flaming sun, and call the breeze  
From the cool chambers of the distant north,  
Moses will be our king, that rod his sceptre,  
And we his slaves ; but if he slack his hand,  
If the sun burn us, and the south wind smite,  
Mark my prophetic words—he'll hear a murmur,  
And that same murmur, swelling as it rolls,  
Which, if we are not lost to sense, it shall,  
Will be his death's knell : therefore wait the issue  
Watch, and arrest occasion—I have said."

And now, their venom spent, the traitorous pair  
Were rising to depart, when Korah thus  
With interposing speech bespoke their stay.  
" Sons of Eliab, of the princely tribe

Of first-born Reuben chiefs, well have you said,  
And, thus advis'd, I am content to wait,  
Till time and opportunity mature  
The patient means, that may ensure revenge.  
What I have said in wrath I rashly said,  
For 'tis the property of wrath to take  
No counsel of the judgment—Let it pass.  
Strange and mysterious are the things you tell  
Of this presumptuous man, who boldly vaunts  
Familiar converse with our Israel's God.  
Ambition nature gave him, Egypt art,  
Falshood is all his own. Heav'n guard my faith  
From such unvouch'd assertions! Sure I am  
His whole life is a fable from the time,  
When launch'd and floating on his ozier raft,  
A wailing infant, he was drawn to land  
By Pharaoh's daughter, and thence Moses call'd :  
Nor did she only name him, but adopt  
And train him as her son—Oh father Nile,  
What secrets hast thou witness'd in thy course !

Who but can spy a preconcerted plot,  
Where Jochebed but play'd the mother's part,  
To screen the frailty of the Memphian dame ?  
Take him, Osiris ! He is all thine own.  
Cradled in artifice, and early school'd  
In all the mystery of Egyptian lore,  
Behold a man made perfect in deceit !  
Trace him through all the mazes of his craft,  
And who can doubt, meek-seeming as he is,  
What mighty projects of ambition breed  
And bourgeon in his heart ? When Pharaoh died—  
Now mark his policy—protection fail'd,  
And Israel groan'd in bondage ; he, who lov'd  
Nor toil nor slavery, fled to Midian's land,  
And providently deem'd it easier task  
To tend the flock of Jethro, than to share  
The stripes and pains and drudgery we endur'd :  
Peaceful were all his days, his nights secure,  
Ours was the labour, his was the repose,  
If in his bosom, whom ambition haunts,

Peace and repose can harbour ; for ev'n there,  
Where all was solitude, and other cares,  
Save for his flock in charge, Moses had none,  
Strange voices, issuing from the midst of flames,  
On Horeb feign'd or fancied to be heard,  
Warn'd him to Egypt: on this plea he came,  
Vaunting his high commission from that power,  
Whose sacred name, so treating, he profanes :  
If this to doubt be sin, whilst yet it rests  
Upon his sole averment, of all men  
I am most guilty. Could I lend my faith  
To feats of sorcery, why should I withhold it  
From Jannes and from Jambres, Pharaoh's seers,  
More than from Moses ? They proceed by spells,  
And turn the charmed waters into blood ;  
The same he does, but takes a bolder tone,  
And arrogates a fellowship with God ;  
And now behold ! exalted into power,  
He, who self-exil'd fled to Midian's land,  
A conscious homicide, at once becomes



Priest, legate, lawgiver, a mighty prince :  
Heav'n be my witness, whilst my reason holds,  
The son of Izhar never shall debase  
His free-born spirit to receive the law  
From Jethro's shepherd ; no, my gallant friends,  
So resolute am I to brave his power,  
That though the firm earth, smitten with his rod,  
Yawn'd to the centre, on the dreadful brink  
Dauntless I'd stand, and from across the gulph  
Hurl my defiance"—More he would have said,  
When now the signal for immediate march  
Burst on his ear : uprose the dark divan ;  
Still glow'd the fiery spot on Korah's cheek,  
And vaunting thus he cried—" Auspicious hopes  
Mount to my heart, that I have heard the knell  
Of our oppressor's power, when now he bids  
That braying trumpet publish to the host  
His desperate resolution to pursue  
Their hopeless march across these thirsty wilds.  
Go forth, ye sons of Reuben ; in the front

Of your brave warriors, first-born as ye are,  
Your high hereditary post assume.  
Mark well the son of Peleth ; he is mine ;  
Associate to my cause—In him confide.”

He said ; forth issuing from the tent they past,  
And to their several stations, deep in thought,  
Pondering their dark devices, took their way

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.



## BOOK THE SECOND.

### ARGUMENT.

*THE Tribes commence their march—Arrive at the Waters of Marah—Miracle wrought there—The Tribes continue their march—Miraculous supply of manna—The Tribes advance to Alus—They are met by a party of the Amalekites under Omar—Conference between him and Joshua—He repairs to Amalek at Rephidim, who, on his report, determines on war, and makes a solemn sacrifice to Chemos—Joshua convokes a council—Confers with Caleb and with Moses—The Tribes advance to Rephidim—Engagement between the Israelites and Amalekites—Defeat and death of Amalek.*



# THE EXODIAD.

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## BOOK THE SECOND.

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NOW in the van, where Nahshon led the strength  
Of Judah, with the associate tribes collegu'd  
Of Issachar and Zebulun, was seen  
The lion standard waving high in air,  
Signal of march commenc'd : Reuben the whilst  
With Gad and Simeon on the southern front  
Stood in well-order'd files, till on the word  
The clarion sounded ; instantly unfurl'd  
Forth flew the banner, whose sky-tinctur'd field  
A human head display'd, emblem of power

And primogenial right : upon the west,  
Where Ephraim and Manasseh, favour'd tribes,  
With Benjamin their martial-column form'd  
In measur'd step, accordant to the stroke  
Of the far-sounding cymbal, bright in arms  
Elishama their chief his ensign rear'd,  
Which to his host the useful lesson taught  
Of patience, figur'd by the lab'ring ox:  
Last in the north the multitude of Dan  
With Naphtali and Asher close the rear :  
These, when Ahiezzer with mighty voice,  
Heard through the files of their extended line,  
Gave the word forth to march, upsent a shout,  
That now proclaim'd their prophet's high behest  
To the last man obey'd : they had assum'd  
A prouder attribute, and on their flag,  
Emblazon'd rich with silver and with gold,  
Pourtray'd an eagle, towering in his flight,  
Within whose grasp a scaly serpent writh'd ;  
Noting how high ascendant valour soars,

And o'er opposing subtilty prevails.

Thus march'd the armies forth from van to rear,  
And them betwixt a helpless multitude  
Of women and of children were dispos'd ;  
Whilst in the centre of the host was stor'd  
All that in Goshen's land they had amass'd,  
The spoils of Egypt, silver, gold and gems :  
There went their flocks and herds, and those, who bore  
Time-honour'd Joseph's yet unburied corpse  
Tow'rd's Shechem's promis'd field—Such the decree  
Of Moses, mindful of their father's oath,  
Pledg'd to their dying patron, not to leave  
His bones in Egypt. Onward thus they mov'd,  
Their minds untainted yet by discontent,  
Their strength entire, their instant wants supplied,  
And with the inspiring shout of myriads cheer'd.

Two days across the desert they advanc'd ;  
The third now dawn'd ; again the trumpet call'd,  
Again the voice of Joshua urg'd the march :  
Dreary was all around ; the shades of night,



With short vouchsafement of perturbed sleep,  
Were fled ; no dews had cool'd the burning sand ;  
Hunger had thinn'd their now diminisht flocks,  
And raging thirst drain'd their late copious store  
Of water, from the wells of Goshen drawn :  
Then 'gan their faith to shake, for every sigh,  
'That weariness half utter'd, half suppress'd,  
Spread and was echo'd through the fainting throng :  
The whispering breeze was swelling to a storm,  
And Korah with malicious triumph saw  
His pois'nous leaven working in their hearts,  
When Joshua, of the armed tribes the chief  
And leader militant, with eye that search'd  
Each heart where rankling disaffection lurk'd,  
Tempering reproof with consolation spake.

“ Soldiers, beware ! ye've had the word to march  
Why halt you then ? Have I recall'd the word ?  
He must be weary of his life, or mad,  
Who dares to disobey me, and arrest  
The armies of the Lord, whilst I command.

Ye men of Judah, is not yours the van ?  
Therefore advance, or to the central tribes,  
Worthier than you, that honour'd post resign.  
And what is it whereof ye would complain,  
If murmuring could redress you ? Do ye thirst ?  
Lo, where at distance yonder palmy grove  
Invites you to her springs ; there drink your fill  
Of Nature's beverage under Nature's shade."

He ceas'd ; and instantly the warrior-tribe,  
Their lion-standard flaunting in the wind,  
With quicken'd step advanc'd : at sight whereof  
The cloud, late dark upon the hero's brow,  
Dispers'd, and joy now brighten'd in his eyes :  
Much were they cheer'd by the approving look,  
Which now they witness'd, as he turn'd to note  
Their orderly demeanour, and athwart  
The trackless waste strait to the wisht-for spot  
Spceded their eager march ; there when arriv'd  
They saw, o'ershadow'd by the spreading palms,  
A range of brimming wells by Edom's sons,

The rude possessors of the country, dug,  
To boundless ecstacy their spirits rose :  
Order was lost ; the march became a race ;  
All ran, all strove, and happiest was he,  
Who first could seize his portion of the pool,  
And lift the welcome chalice to his lips—  
Vain haste ! no sooner did it meet his touch,  
But with disgust revolting from the draught,  
Than gall more bitter, to the ground he dash'd  
Th' intolerable potion : horror-struck,  
In mute amazement pondering their distress,  
By disappointment doubly thus enhanc'd,  
Some in despair refus'd the proffer'd cup,  
Whilst others, spite of its repulsive taste,  
The nauseous beverage boldly tried to quaff,  
But all in vain : then burst their sorrows forth,  
And thus to Moses, now in sight, they spake.

“Servant and friend of God ; if such thou art,  
And we his people, why hast thou deceiv'd  
And lur'd us hither, to expire with thirst

In sight of waters, which we cannot taste ?  
Is it for this from Egypt's land we came ?  
Thrice-happy land, through which the bounteous Nile  
Pours life and health from his capacious urn ;  
Oh, for one draught of that refreshing stream  
What composition would be now too much ?  
Seer, in thy potency oh lead us back ;  
Let us re-pace our weary steps, and live,  
Though 'twere in bondage heavier than the past,  
With stricter task-masters and harder toils :  
Contrasted with this mis'ry, better far  
And happier had it been, if the vext sea,  
When its wild waves on Pharaoh's host recoil'd,  
Had swept us with them to its deep abyss.  
Father, at whose command we came, on whom  
Rests our last hope, we know, for we have seen,  
Thy wonder-working power, oh hear our prayer,  
And save thy children perishing with thirst ;  
Lift up thy hands and bring us show'rs from Heaven,  
Or make this loathsome pool a living spring,

And purify its waters to preserve us.”

They said, nor did their sufferings fail to move  
The heart of their meek prophet ; to the throne  
Of mercy he put up his fervent prayer  
For inspiration ; instantly it rush'd  
Like a full torrent o'er his labouring soul,  
Full of his God—“ Approach, he loudly cried,  
With lively faith approach and quench your thirst !”  
Then pluck'd a bough from an o'erhanging tree,  
And cast it on the waters—“ Lo ! 'tis done,  
Again he cried, the miracle's complete :  
God, whose long-suffering goodness ye provoke,  
When thus ye doubt his providence, by me  
Commands these bitter waters to be sweet,  
Wholesome and pure ; and greater works than this  
God will vouchsafe, if faithful ye abide :  
Approach ! but ere you slake your burning thirst  
In the cool fountain, than the Nile more clear  
And like his stream exhaustless, know 'tis God  
Bestows the blessing, and to God alone

Give all your praise ; to me no praise is due.”

He ceas'd, and from the well a goblet rais'd  
With water fill'd, fresh as the unsunn'd rill,  
That from the cavern'd grot translucent flows.  
The admiring multitude, with awe impress'd,  
The welcome boon receiv'd ; to all was dealt  
The life-restoring draught—When thus the seer.

“ Ye waters, which the mercy of our God  
Hath thus converted, henceforth to all time  
Be Marah call'd ! Bitter hath been your taste,  
Bitter shall be your name. Hear, Israel, hear,  
And whilst your tongues record the wond'rous deed,  
Remember 'twas at Marah's bitter pool  
Ye murmur'd, and by miracle were sav'd.”

All saw, and all exultingly proclaim'd  
The witnest miracle ; from tribe to tribe  
The word of triumph ran—“ Behold a sign,  
A token that the Lord is our defence ;  
We are the armies of the living God ;  
Who shall withstand us ?” Thus with nerves new brac'd

And hearts high-beating they resum'd their march ;  
Nor stay'd their progress till to Elim's wells  
They came, what time across the western sky  
The variegated clouds of evening stole,  
And with them brought exhausted Nature's cure,  
The soothing balm of sweet oblivious sleep.

Soon as the day-spring glimmer'd in the east,  
Or ere the kindling sun began to launch  
His fiery arrows through the sulphurous air,  
The early trumpet gave the warning note,  
Whose call imperious bids the soldier rouse,  
And warrants no delay. The palmy grove  
And springs of Elim mournfully they leave ;  
For desolation here embay'd them round,  
Whether to Pharan's rocks, or Sinai's mount,  
Or the sea-margin they shall bend their course.  
Scene more disconsolate had never spread  
Its horrors to their view : languid and slow,  
In suffocating clouds of dust involv'd,  
The fainting soldier held his weary way

Over the burning soil: it seem'd as here  
Nature had breath'd her last, and made this spot  
Of man and beast the universal grave.

Joshua, who saw that now the time was come  
When hope, if not recall'd, would quickly fail,  
And let despair possess the minds of men,  
Thus in familiar phrase address'd the host.

“Comrades, I own it is a painful march,  
Which with gall'd feet over the scorching sands  
We must of force pursue, but 'tis our part  
To meet all chances with an equal mind.  
If we, who are the strength of Israel, faint,  
How will the ag'd, the infant and the throng  
Of helpless females struggle with their fate?  
These sufferings ye can bear, for they are short,  
And I should wrong your courage could I doubt.  
If more than human nature can endure,  
Famine or thirst, invade us, we have God  
For our provider, nor will He, who made  
The bitter waters sweet to quench our thirst,



Permit these sunbeams to extinguish life,  
And strew this desert with the bones of us,  
Whom he has call'd his armies, and decreed  
To purge the nations, and erect the throne  
Of his salvation in its holy place."

This said, the hero ceas'd, for now he saw  
The fire rekindled in his soldiers' hearts,  
Which, but for his reanimating breath,  
Had languish'd and expir'd ; from rank to rank  
The consolation spread, and straight behold !  
By the example of the army's chief  
The leaders of the several tribes stood forth,  
And with loud voices dealt their mandates out,  
Mild or incentive, as to each seem'd meet  
And fitted to the temper of the time.

Reverend with years the sage Gamaliel stood,  
His white beard mantling o'er his aged breast,  
And to Manasseh's sons at large discours'd  
(No thrifty orator) of ancient times,  
When to the patriarch Abraham and his seed

God gave the promise, and with pious zeal  
Will'd them to trust in God's unerring word.

Towering as Atlas, mail'd in burnisht steel,  
Elishama, the rock of Ephraim's strength,  
Bade halt his legion, and from forth their ranks  
Advancing, loud and confident he spake :  
Careless of ornament, he little sought  
To grace his speech, but in the soldier's phrase  
Bade them arouse their courage, and prepare  
For glorious vict'ries to be won, and hordes  
Of outcast pagans, countless as the sand,  
Doom'd to be swept away, or ere they reach'd  
'The promis'd region—"Thus, he cried, we'll break  
Their banded multitudes"—and at the word  
In his strong grasp he seiz'd, and snapp'd in twain  
His massy javelin, like an ozier twig.

Now march'd the army ; those of stronger frame  
Their weaker comrades cheer'd, or to their lips  
Rais'd the refreshing draught, or led them on,  
As with enfeebled and precarious step

O'er the loose sand they struggled to advance.  
Before them Pharan's long-stretcht mountains rang'd,  
High, rude and cragg'd, ting'd with ghastly shades  
Of red and black, demonstrating the force  
Of the fierce sunbeams ; on their peaked tops,  
To man impervious, vultures build their nests,  
Whilst in the dells and hollows cowering lurk  
The savage foragers, who or in troops  
Pursue their timid prey, or lonely prowl ;  
But these to Israel's host no terror gave,  
And much it gladden'd them to find the soil,  
Where'er the mountains stretch'd their rocky base,  
No longer yielding to the passer's foot,  
But, like the beach by ocean lav'd, compact.

Here, as they gaz'd upon the rude display  
Of Nature's wild sublimity in view,  
A group of lofty palm trees they espied :  
With grateful ardour on they rush'd to share  
The liquid treasures, which their shade conceal'd :  
They drank, and had their fill, but to appease

Their hunger little now remain'd in store,  
And of that little their despair made waste :  
Nor were there wanting spirits pre-dispos'd  
To cherish discontents ; but even these  
Through very weariness had sunk to sleep,  
When Joshua, captain of the host, went forth  
In silence of the night, and to the tent,  
Where by his wakeful lamp in thought profound  
Sate the meek servant of the Lord, he came ;  
And him approaching with obeisance due,  
Thus to the prophet spake the warrior chief  
“ Father, I know thy. God will not permit  
This multitude to die for lack of food ;  
Yet, as befits my duty, I have search'd,  
And find remaining nor of bread nor flesh  
Wherewith to furnish out to-morrow's meal ;  
Such is our dearth ; and when the trumpet sounds,  
And I command to march, if then they say—  
‘ Give us to eat’—what answer shall I make ?”  
To him the prophet without pause replied—

“ My son, to say what answer thou shalt make,  
When the exhausted soldier cries for food,  
Is not with me, but God ; for what am I,  
That I should aught conceive as of myself ?  
God gave the promise ; with a mighty hand  
He brought us forth, and in a fiery cloud  
Marshall'd our way into this wilderness ;  
Can I then doubt if he will leave us here,  
Without a token of his providence,  
To faint and perish ? No, on these bare rocks  
He can prepare a table, and command  
The very dews of Heaven, that now descend  
Upon these barren sands, to be as bread,  
And feed his people. Fear not then their cry,  
Though envious Korah and Eliab's sons  
Join in their clamorous appeal for food.  
Great things, my son, are coming to the birth,  
And he, that dares to murmur, ere the sun  
Shall rise to-morrow, silenc'd and abash'd,  
Shall in his cloud of glory see the Lord.

Great things our God hath done, but greater far  
The things, that shall hereafter be reveal'd :  
And thou, the highly favour'd of the Lord,  
Shalt see and know and understand to do them.  
And now no more ; for I perceive the word  
Of power is even now gone forth. Depart !  
See that thou halt not by the way, or turn  
To gaze around, above thee or behind ;  
For the providing angel is come down,  
And from his wings, in dewy manna steep'd,  
Sheds through the hallow'd air celestial food."

He ceas'd ; the warrior to his tent return'd,  
The prophet in the spirit to his God.  
· Next morning with the first return of light,  
Behold, the ground about the camp was strew'd  
With what appear'd like honey-dew congeal'd,  
Sweet to the taste, substantial, silv'ry-white,  
In fashion like the coriander seed,  
And as the hoar-frost small ; this when they saw,  
They wist not what it was, and wond'ring cried—

'Tis manna—Strait from Moses came the word—  
“ 'Tis the Lord's bread ; let him, that hungers, eat :  
Bring forth your omers, fill them to the brim ;  
He, that o'erflows, shall nought superfluous gain,  
And he, that gathers little, shall not lack :  
Let no man leave of it, for day by day  
God will provide, and all that ye reserve  
Corruption shall defile.”—So Moses spake,  
And God was glorified, and Israel sav'd.

Thus from the elemental stores the host,  
By miracle supplied, resum'd their march  
Across the gloomy wilderness of Zin.  
From the high peak of Pharan's rocky mount,  
In quick succession floating through the sky,  
Thick clouds were wafted, whiter than the fleece,  
On which at Ophrah fell the dews of Heaven.  
By these protected from the noon-tide rays,  
And by fresh breezes fann'd, dispensing health,  
From Amorrhea's eastern range of hills,  
Daphca they pass'd, and now beyond the range

Of Pharan's towering heights they had advanc'd  
To Alus, bordering on the Red Sea coast,  
Where Amalek in savage grandeur reign'd ;  
When lo ! a troop of horsemen they espied,  
Whose helmets by the snow-white plumes surcharg'd  
Of the pluckt ostrich, and the martial air  
Of their fleet phalanx wheel'd in close array,  
To all the heav'n-fed multitude gave sign  
That here no men of peace they should expect.  
And now, when nearer seen, each in his hand  
Brandish'd the warrior's spear, and on they came,  
As if the purpose of their eager course  
Had been the van of Israel to assail ;  
When, on the signal reining in their steeds,  
Their leader thus in accent loud and shrill  
His brief abrupt interrogations urg'd—

“ Whence and what are ye, strangers ? Know ye not  
Upon whose soil ye trespass ? Wherefore then  
Are ye come hither ? Instantly declare ! ”

Him answer'd Joshua thus—“ We are the sons



Of Jacob, and from Goshen's land we come  
Through the Arabian gulph. You know us now ;  
Know yourselves also, and of this be sure—  
We are not careful whose may be the soil,  
For we ask nothing of it, nor find aught  
To move our envy, or invite our stay.  
Free passage if you give us, it is well ;  
If not, we must proceed without your leave,  
And yours must be the peril, if you stay us.  
This is our answer. Now say, is it peace ?”

Him sternly viewing thus the chief replied—  
“Peace with the race of Jacob? Peace with those,  
In whom no trust we place? It cannot be.  
Suffice to say that we are Esau's sons,  
And from his first-born Eliphaz derive  
These mountain fortresses, and wide domain,  
Whose barriers, over Idumea stretcht,  
Some like yourselves unprivileg'd have pass'd,  
But none unpunisht ere departed thence.”

He said, nor paus'd to hear, but in the flank

Of his proud warhorse buried his sharp spur,  
And towards his native mountains sped his course :  
Him follow'd close his well-appointed troop :  
Like distant thunder sounded the firm hoofs  
Of their fleet steeds over the rocky soil,  
And clouds of dust their winding progress mark'd.  
Onward they press'd, till from Rephidim's heights  
The wide encampment of their prince they saw,  
Stretching in pomp barbaric o'er the plain.

High o'er the rest the royal tent arose,  
With martial emblems deck'd and spoils of war :  
There, shelter'd from the sun's meridian beams,  
Imperial Amalek repos'd ; around  
His watchful guard patroll'd, that none might break  
His sacred slumbers ; but no awe restrain'd  
The speed of Omar ; from the mountain's side  
Across the plain his rapid course he bent.  
Him the astonisht multitude beheld  
With his impetuous squadron pass the camp,  
Their panting horses white with foam, themselves

With travel hot, and heedless of the throng,  
Which, still augmenting, follow'd with shrill cries  
Of mingled fear and wonder. To the tent  
As they approach'd, more dissonant and loud  
Their yelling clamour grew. From slumber rous'd,  
Uncertain what the tumult might portend,  
Forthwith the monarch snatch'd his javelin up,  
And half-accoutred rush'd from out his tent :  
At sight whereof Omar with sudden spring  
Leapt from his steed, and thus with aspect wild  
And hurried accent eagerly exclaim'd—

“ To arms, brave Amalek ! behold us charg'd  
With tidings, that announce immediate war.  
Already on the confines of your realm  
An insolent aggressor mocks your power,  
And dares you to resistance. Jacob's sons,  
Freed from Egyptian bondage, and, array'd  
In warlike state, across the desert march,  
Intent on conquest”—More he would have said,  
When Amalek indignantly broke forth—

“ What conquest, but by treachery and fraud,  
Can Jacob’s base descendants gain from us,  
To war not less accustom’d and inur’d,  
Than they to slavery and inglorious crafts,  
For women and mechanics only fit ?”

“ Despise them not, the veteran chief replied,  
But in your wisdom pause, whilst I relate  
What it concerns the nation’s lord to hear  
Of my discovery of this mighty host,  
Now in the very bowels of our land,  
And almost in our camp. Upon the height  
Of Jetabata as I held my post,  
To watch if haply in my prospect’s range  
Merchants, from Gilcad or Assyria charg’d  
With spices, precious balsams, myrrh and gold,  
Their passage might essay, I turn’d my eyes  
Tow’rds Alus, and behold the desert blaz’d  
With glittering arms to the horizon’s verge.  
Amaz’d to see such myriads on their march,  
Where the indignant soil alike refus’d

Or food or shelter, and, unless sustain'd  
By miracle, they must of force have died,  
I deem'd it right more nearly to inspect  
What they might be and whence. Upon the word  
My gallant comrades vaulted on their steeds,  
And follow'd where I led them, till we came  
In front of what appear'd to be the van  
Of this embattled nation, when behold,  
One, whose high bearing mark'd him as their chief,  
A youthful warrior—and in truth, dread Sir,  
Right worthy he appear'd—from forth the ranks  
Advanc'd and bade them halt; this done, they form'd  
In orderly array, alike prepar'd  
To wait the parley, or abide the charge.  
While thus in numbers confident they stood,  
Their unfurl'd ensigns waving in the wind,  
Expecting our appeal, I loudly ask'd  
Why thus upon our confines they encroach'd,  
And what and whence they were and whither bound :  
To this their captain instant answer gave—

‘ They were the sons of Jacob, and had pass’d  
From Pharaoh’s realm across th’ Arabian gulph :  
They were not careful whose the country was ;  
It yielded nothing, and they felt no want ;  
They sought not war with us, and should prefer  
To take their journey through our land in peace ;  
But, if oppos’d, the peril would be ours.’

This threat’ning speech indignantly I heard,  
And, as became me, answer’d ; then with speed  
I hasted hither, in your royal ear  
Of what had thus occur’d the sum to state—”

“ I’ve heard enough, th’ impatient prince replied ;  
Whilst in these veins the blood of Esau flows,  
No pulse within this vital frame shall beat,  
That does not beat the summons to revenge ;  
No thought in this recording heart shall dwell,  
But of eternal war with Jacob’s sons,  
And hatred deep as Jacob’s perfidy.  
More guileful than the crocodile, that lurks  
In fatal ambush on the banks of Nile,

More noxious than the pestilential south,  
That sweeps the wilderness with mortal blast,  
Was he, from whom these hordes of slaves descend ;  
Therefore no peace with them ; for as the source  
So is the stream ; each son is Jacob's self,  
And in each mother a Rebecca lives.  
In falsehood they were born ; upon their lips  
Their founder stamp'd th' hereditary lie,  
And it abides ; for lo ! as he deceiv'd  
His father Isaac when by age grown blind,  
And stole a blessing from the elder-born,  
So they from us by artifice would wrest  
These ample districts, our inheritance,  
Intent on plunder whilst professing peace.  
But we, whose cities are the tented field,  
Who exercise no arts but those of war,  
A nation ever ready, ever arm'd,  
'Gainst all invaders will maintain our rights :  
And what have we to fear from Jacob's race,  
Outcasts of Egypt, who to Pharaoh's yoke

For ages past have tamely bow'd the neck ?  
Come they not here yet smarting with the scourge,  
Their hands yet hard with labour, and their limbs  
Scarr'd with ignoble stripes ? Let them approach :  
Myriads of slaves like these appal not me,  
Who in my people's hearts have built my throne,  
Strong as their courage, stedfast as their truth.  
Though Egypt's thousand gods could not withstand,  
Nor the seas stay them, nor the desert starve,  
Yet when the trumpet sounds, as soon it shall,  
The charge to battle, and the fatal twang  
Of Chemos' bow high o'er their heads is heard,  
Terror shall seize and turn to shameful flight  
Their dastard tribes ; then conquest shall be ours,  
Glory and great revenge shall crown our arms,  
And Chemos, fed with hecatombs of slain,  
Shall stop his flaming chariot, where he sits  
With glittering shafts, and garments roll'd in blood,  
To share our triumph and enjoy our praise."

This said, he drove his javelin in the ground,



And, turning to the assembled people, cried—  
“ Bring stones, and build an altar on this spot.  
Behold, the shadow shews that noon is past.  
Haste, and propitiate your descending God !”

No more, 'twas done ; a massy pile of stones,  
The tribute of a thousand hands, arose,  
Rude as the art, that rear'd it. 'Thither flock'd  
Diviners, dreamers, visionary seers,  
Magicians, minstrels, sacrificing priests,  
With all their pagan trumpery, a crew  
Of moon-struck wretches, all prepar'd to storm  
With dismal howlings their deaf idol's ears,  
And lance their flesh, and weave their mystic dance  
Around his altar—rites profane and vile—  
“ Hear us, O Chemos, hear us !” was their cry  
From the third hour incessant, till the sun,  
Red in the west, went down, a rayless ball,  
Merg'd in a fiery cloud : whereat each eye  
Aghast was turn'd on that ill-omen'd sign,  
And silence reign'd and terror seiz'd the throng.

This when the king perceiv'd—" Prepare, he cried,  
Prepare your victims to appease the wrath  
Of the malicious demon, that has dash'd  
Our setting sun with cloud of threat'ning hue."—

Strait on the altar leapt th' infuriate priests,  
Stript to the waist, their obscene bodies bar'd  
And gash'd with bleeding wounds : no stop, no pause  
For rest or silence ; all night long the flames  
Glar'd horribly, and dreadful were the groans  
Of dying victims, mingling with the shrieks  
Of frantic mothers, whose devoted babes  
Were made to pass through fire—impious device,  
Project conceiv'd of Satan to assuage  
The disappointed malice and revenge  
Of his heav'n-exil'd angels, and deride  
That typical oblation, offer'd up  
By faithful Abraham on Moriah's mount,  
Where stood the church of God in after-times,  
When by the one great sacrifice for sin  
Once made, the whole Satanic league receiv'd

Their second downfall, never more to rise.

While thus around their altar, with the blood  
Of human victims streaming, Esau's sons,  
Alien from God, their impious orgies plied,  
Deaf'ning the ear of night with direful yells,  
Not such the scene where Israel was encamp'd ;  
There stillness reign'd and sorrow-soothing sleep  
Threw its oblivious mantle o'er the limbs  
Of the way-wearied soldier. Joshua still  
In council with the assembled leaders sate ;  
For long debate ensued, and some there were,  
Who held not with the advocates for war :  
These were for soothing measures, nor approv'd  
The high and dauntless tone, in which their chief  
Had parley'd with th' Amalekitish troop—  
“ Why thus renew, they cried, the ancient feuds,  
Too long maintain'd 'twixt the fraternal tribes  
Of Jacob and of Esau ? Why provoke  
The sword of Amalek, as if our march  
Over this hideous desert, and the care

Of all this multitude were not enough,  
Unless we brav'd fresh dangers, and contriv'd  
This unprovok'd aggression to insult  
And weary out the mercies of our God ?”

Thus with the show of reason, but with hearts,  
By faction tainted, and by envy steel'd  
Against their youthful leader, they had hop'd  
By these inglorious councils to degrade  
And tarnish his high fame ; for Dathan there,  
And, him beside, Abiram in the roll  
Of Reuben's princes held their state, and sate  
Darkling in close cabal ; but vain their plots  
And impotent their malice ; calm contempt,  
Disdaining answer, mark'd the hero's brow,  
And when Elishama, whose fiery zeal  
Ill brook'd their chilling argument, arose  
Impatient to reply, with outstretcht hand  
Imposing silence, thus the chieftain spake.

“ Stop, brave Elishama ! we know your zeal  
For Israel's glory and Jehovah's cause.

Words are not needed when the warrior's soul  
Speaks in his eyes, and every feature glows  
With the bright flame, that kindles at his heart.  
Am I not in your bosom ? Yes, I know  
You and your gallant tribe alone would meet  
This haughty challenger, who dares defy  
The armies of the Lord ; but though to you,  
To Caleb and to Nahshon it belongs,  
With other generous spirits like your own,  
To brave the front of battle, there remains  
A duty not less urgent to defend  
The Levites and the women, nor shall war  
Prevent us to devote a strong reserve  
To this important charge ; and now no more—  
The night gains on us. Princes, elders, chiefs !  
By the authority on me devolv'd  
I here dismiss your council, and commend  
Each in his proper station to devote  
The hours 'twixt this and morning to repose."

He said, nor did they not obey the word

With voice and look imperative announc'd,  
But rising, as with one accord, dispers'd.  
Caleb alone, by signal from the chief,  
Stay'd his departure, when, as friend to friend,  
After short pause and one prelusive sigh,  
Half utter'd, half suppress, thus Joshua spake.

“ Warrior, by Moses in the power of God  
Elect to great achievements, thou hast heard  
These men, who counsel ignominious peace  
With these idolatrous and pagan hordes,  
Whose residence within this waste we knew,  
And for whose coming we had cause to look ;  
For how can they be other than our foes,  
And of that stock, which must be rooted up  
Ere we can plant our seed in Canaan's soil ?  
Why then do these peace-advocates essay  
To check our vengeance, when the word of power  
Bids us advance ? Is it because they love  
Peace and its blessings, courtesy, content  
And decent order ? These doth Dathan love ?

These doth Abiram ? No, they talk of peace,  
Whilst war is in their hearts—Now, Caleb, mark !  
When on their Arab steeds these pagans rush  
Impetuous to the charge, reserve your strength,  
And when you meet the chieftain, whom we saw,  
Strike the proud vaunter down : but if the king,  
If Amalek himself shall head his troop,  
There is our mark, my friend, that is a prize  
Worthy our best ambition, though we drain  
In the brave struggle every vital drop,  
And die for Israel's glory.”—Here he paus'd,  
Whilst, as his fancy pictur'd forth the scene,  
A ruddier tint, true valour's native hue,  
His glowing cheek assum'd—When Caleb thus—  
“ Rightly you judge my heart, illustrious chief :  
In friendship, as in duty, it is yours ;  
And that bright honour, which you hold to view,  
Is than the blood, that visits it, more dear.  
If in to-morrow's fight I fail to earn  
The glorious meed of my commander's praise,

Let not Jephunneh own me for his son ;  
But if I fall, and you—so grant it, Heaven !—  
Survive to bless our Israel, by the love,  
Which my soul bears you, tell my aged sire  
How I have died, and it shall heal his grief.”

“ Enough ! replied the chief ; thy pious charge,  
If life is granted me, shall be obey’d.  
Now to thy tent, and may the God we serve  
Pour on thy temples that heart-healing rest,  
Which nerves the arm with vigour to achieve  
Those generous darings, that become the brave :  
And now farewell ! We conquer, or we fall.”

‘ This said, the chieftain from his couch arose,  
And, as he grasp’d the warrior’s hand, awhile  
Pensive he stood, as if to lengthen out  
The parting moment ; then with look, that made  
Silence more eloquent than speech, he loos’d  
His tender hold, when Caleb bow’d the head,  
As to his chief, and issued from the tent.

Now in the spangled firmament full-orb’d



The moon effulgent rode ; from forth his tent,  
In solemn musings wrapt and care-opprest,  
Moses, the chosen of the Lord, went forth,  
And tow'rd's the centre of the camp, where stood  
The altar of Jehovah, bent his course.

Him when the guard Levitical, who watch'd  
The sacred spot, descried, with silent step,  
Cautious of interruption, they fell back,  
And with their eyes fixt on the earth, their hands  
Upon their bosoms reverently cross'd,  
Stood motionless. Awhile the prophet paus'd,  
In thought profound immers'd, and upward cast  
A meek imploring look, and bow'd his head  
Before the altar bare and silvery white ;  
Then, kneeling, thus in pray'r besought his God.

“ Father of Heav'n, in whom all nature lives,  
And by whose mercy all things are upheld,  
Deign with thy gracious favour to behold  
And hear thy supplicant, who humbly prays  
For these thy servants in this hour of need,

When hordes of enemies, not less to thee  
And thy pure worship hostile than to them,  
Are arming for the battle. Gracious Lord,  
Not now, not in this perilous extreme,  
When lo ! in thee confiding, as beneath  
The shadow of thy wings, they rest,—not now  
Their murmurings, their offences call to mind,  
But spare thy people, Lord ! Oh, not this night,  
Whilst those yet sleep, that ere to-morrow's sun  
Sink in the west shall sleep to wake no more,  
Let Korah's contumacious sin provoke  
Thy wrath to strike : Oh, rather turn his heart,  
Teach him to shun the peril of his way,  
And save him from the pit. Stretch forth thine hand,  
And let not these idolaters prevail  
Against thy servant Joshua ; let not these,  
The apostate race of Esau, who advance  
With Chemos for their god, presume to stand  
Before the armies of the Lord of Hosts.  
Not for my sake, for I am nothing worth,

And nothing dare to ask, but for the sake  
Of righteous Abraham, lead these children on,  
Heirs of the blessing, to the promis'd land,  
And manifest thy glory to the world."

He rose, and turning to the east espied  
White in the lunar beam the tow'ring plume  
And glittering mail, that grac'd the youthful form  
Of Israel's chieftain. On the hero came,  
Observ'd of Moses ; when, as he approach'd  
The sacred altar, lowering to the dust  
His spear, till then uplifted, thus he spake.

" Why is the health of Israel thus expos'd  
To the night-air ? It is not now the hour  
For age like thine to tempt th' unfriendly damps,  
That from the steaming pores of earth exhale :  
Behold thy tent and Aaron's both in view ;  
There seek the shelter'd couch and shun the night."

" Son, said the prophet, when the Lord so wills,  
Death in the noon-day walks as in the night ;  
And who should watch the folded sheep but he

Who is their shepherd ? Why, when all the camp  
Is wrapt in sleep and silence, do we see  
The station'd centinel upon his post,  
Where duty plants him ? So am I on mine,  
Whilst in this hour of danger I come forth,  
And seek the Lord in pray'r. Full sure I am,  
That with to-morrow's dawn we must approve  
The temper of our swords upon the crest  
Of Amalek, the hereditary foe  
Of all, that spring from Jacob : wherefore then  
Dost thou, the leader of the host, refuse  
That wholesome rest, so needed to recruit  
And nerve thee for the battle ? Speak, my son ;  
Why are thy looks so troubled ? Stout the heart  
And strong should be the confidence to bear  
The burden of command so vast as thine."

To him the chief—" When the contagious taint  
Of Korah's perfidy hath sapp'd the zeal  
Of some, that hold command in Israel's tribes,  
And I perceive myself their envy's mark,

Needs must my looks be troubled, whilst my heart  
Is tortur'd with its feelings. Much I fear  
Too fav'ring and too gracious thou hast been  
To thy unworthy servant. When I weigh  
My station's various duties, and with them  
My youth and insufficiency compare,  
Like some stray traveller, who from the verge  
Of a tremendous precipice looks down  
With horror on th' appalling gulf below,  
My fancy sickens, and methinks I see  
Unnumber'd ills, a family of woes,  
All sprung from my unfitness; I behold  
Our host by me conducted to their graves,  
I view them as they bleeding lie, mine ears  
Ring with their dying groans. Oh mighty seer,  
These are my visions, and, if these be true,  
Give me a private station in the fight,  
And let me earn an honourable grave,  
Remote from envy, in my nation's cause."

"No more of this! the glowing prophet cried;

Though merit never with more grace appears  
Than when in blushing diffidence array'd,  
There is a time when virtue must be bold,  
And, self-confiding, with the armed hand  
Of strong authority pull down the flag,  
That upstart rash sedition else will rear.  
Go forth, my son, and put thy trust in Ilim,  
To whom the secrets of all hearts are known.  
The Lord will be with Judah ; Ephraim's spear  
Shall not be broken, nor Manassch's bow.  
Strong is my hope, that from the mountain's peak  
When I survey the battle, God will see  
Th' uplifting of my hands and hear my pray'r.  
And now depart—Heav'n's mercy be thy guard !  
And when this hoary head, bow'd down with age,  
Shall be remitted to its kindred dust,  
Advancing still in virtue and renown,  
Jehovah's conqu'ring armics thou shalt lead  
To their predestin'd seat, and there behold  
The glorious promise to the fathers giv'n

Made perfect and apportion'd to the sons."

He ceas'd ; and as when soft descending dew  
Falls on the grateful earth, fresh springs the grass,  
Nature revives, the fainting flow'rets live,  
And mingled sweets are wafted through the air ;  
So with the prophet's words the cloud, that hung  
Dark on the hero's brow, dispers'd, and bright  
And clear the flame of his ambition glow'd.  
Soon as the morning dawn'd the awak'ning blast  
Of the shrill trumpet sounded to array :  
Nahshon the whilst by Joshua's command  
Had drawn the men of Judah forth, and form'd  
Far in the van apart ; when soon, behold,  
Elishama with Ephraim from the west,  
Back'd by Manasseh's bowmen, was descried  
Ranging his close-form'd columns in the rear  
Of Judah's warriors, marshall'd for the fight.  
This done, the leaders of th' embattled tribes  
By signal to the army's front advanc'd,  
Where stood their chief with Caleb by his side,

Both bright in arms and mail'd from heel to helm ;  
When Joshua thus—" Illustrious chiefs, on you  
And on your conduct in th' impending fight  
(I name not courage—yours admits no doubt)  
The fame, the fortune of our Israel rests.  
Three tribes, enough for glory, I select  
From all our host to quell this recreant foe,  
Born of our stock, but from our faith estrang'd.  
Full well ye know renown how dearer far  
Than life it is, how worse than death disgrace.  
Last night, when some there were, who spake of peace,  
'Twas then I noted, then I read your hearts :  
Then, brave Gamaliel, I beheld you rise  
Reverend with sage experience, whilst all ears  
Hung on your speech, and every tongue was husht :  
Smooth flow'd your words, but deep and strong the stream  
Of their resistless eloquence—I heard ;  
And by your wisdom and your zeal confirm'd,  
I felt secure in my resolve for war.  
Now, as in council great, be great in arms ;



Manassch's warriors will not shame their chief."

To him Gamaliel—"Joshua, for myself,  
For my especial tribe, and all, who hear  
Or but at distance witness your address,  
Thus, whilst I press upon my falchion's blade  
My lips in token of my honour's pledge,  
I give myself to shame, if I or these,  
Whom I command, desert you in the fight,  
And swerve from our affiance. No, brave youth,  
Whom I announce for mighty conquests born,  
We will not tarnish the great name we bear.—  
Our leader is Jehovah—Chemos theirs;  
Who then can doubt of victory but those,  
That grudge the palm to Moses and to thee?"

And now Elishama essay'd to speak—  
Tow'ring he stood, a monument of strength,  
His dark brow beetling o'er his deep-sunk eye.

"Here is my heart, the gallant warrior cried,  
'Tis God's, 'tis Israel's, and, whilst yet it beats,  
Joshua, 'tis thine. In Ephraim's tribe alone

We number fifty thousand fighting men,  
And hold ourselves well able to confront  
These hunters of the desert, who bestride  
Their horses, and conceive them a defence  
Against our spears—vain hope and vain defence,  
As soon their scatter'd multitude shall prove.”  
Frowning he ceas'd—To him the chief replied.—

“ For thee, Elishama, my only wish  
Is to restrain thy valour, lest the light  
Of Ephraim be extinguisht, and amidst  
Our joys for victory we mourn for him,  
Who bled to gain it. Warriors, you command  
Those, whom the pillar'd seas could not oppose :  
Are these barbarians stronger than the waves,  
That we should fear them—swifter than the winds,  
That we should plot how to escape their rage?  
No, such inglorious projects suit not us,  
Who fight beneath the banners of our God.  
Therefore, brave Nahshon, at the word unfurl  
Your lion-standard ! Sound, ye trumpets, sound

A loud defiance from your brazen throats,  
And waft it, echoes, to Rephidim's rocks !"—

No more ; by Nahshon instantly unfurl'd  
Judah's broad banner floated in the wind.  
When as the columns militant beheld,  
'The sword of Joshua, signal for their march,  
High waving o'er his lion-crested helm,  
Onward they mov'd ; and as with measur'd step  
Over the rocky soil they held their way,  
Their burnisht helmets and high-ported spears  
Bright in the horizontal sunbeams play'd,  
Till far behind them Pharan's rocks they left,  
And tow'rds Rephidim, where sublimely rose  
Horeb's vast mass, and Sinai's tow'ring brow,  
With energy, as yet uncheckt, they came.

And now, the prospect varying as they pass'd,  
The rocks in rude magnificence arose,  
And, closing tow'rds each other, left a strait,  
As 'twixt two massy walls, dcep, unexplor'd,  
Commodious covert for an ambusht foe.

Here whilst the cautious chieftain stay'd his march,  
By those, who scal'd the craggy heights, was seen  
The hostile army covering all the plain.  
Instant the tribes elect with quicken'd step  
And front diminisht speeded through the pass,  
And on the open champaign by their chief  
Form'd into line the firm battalions stood ;  
Nor did the strong reserve of armed tribes,  
Now under sage Ahiezer's command,  
Attempt the rocky pass. Moses the whilst,  
Led by the spirit to the mountain's top,  
Arm'd with the rod of his vicarious power,  
Stood eminent, and from his eagle-height  
'Through the clear air, from mist obstructive purg'd,  
From flank to flank each rival host survey'd.

Rang'd for the battle either army stood  
Silent and still as death—tremendous pause !—  
When lo ! forth-issuing from the Arabian ranks  
One, that gave token of a parley, came,  
And thus to Joshua the proud pagan spake.—

“The great king sends me. Hear, and mark his words !  
Why do the sons of Jacob thus provoke  
Instant destruction ? Render up your arms,  
And so march onwards ; or through yonder pass  
Retrace your steps back to the Red-Sea coast,  
From which ye came—further ye must not come—  
So Amalek commands.”—“ Say to your king,  
Joshua replied, we covet not to hold  
One spot of earth, that owns him for its lord.  
Our arms, as yet with human blood unstain’d,  
We cannot spare ; the presence of your host  
Makes that injunction fruitless ; to return  
Is not within our choice ; the God we serve  
Bids us advance, and Him we must obey.  
You have our answer. Bear it to your king !”

He said, when instantly the Arab wheel’d  
His active steed, and shot across the plain  
Swift as the meteor’s glance. All eyes the whilst  
Were bent to Joshua, anxious to descry  
What purpose this short parley might effect.

Nor long was their suspense, for now the foe  
Upsent their barbarous war-denouncing yell,  
Which with the din of their deep-echoing conchs  
And brazen tubes discordant, intermixt  
With the shrill neighing of their horses, form'd  
A chorus horrible to human ears.  
No stop, no pause—In clouds of dust involv'd,  
With loose rein spurring their impetuous steeds,  
Wild and unform'd, the shouting squadrons rush'd. .  
Them with undaunted courage Judah's front  
On their stout spears receiv'd ; they, little us'd  
To such rude salutation, soon beheld  
Their foremost warriors writhing in the dust,  
And spread like waves rebounding from the rock,  
Whilst Judah stood unshaken and entire.

This when with eye quick-glancing Joshua saw,  
“ Advance ! he cried, but still in line compact ;  
They break, they fly ; lo ! where on yond high mount  
Israel's presiding genius, heav'n-inspir'd,  
Your prophet with uplifted hands I see,

Invoking victory—and behold, 'tis yours !”

He said ; as when with mountain-torrents flusht  
Swift-flowing Tigris, or Euphrates deep,  
Their rugged banks o’er topping, far and wide  
Deluge the fruitful vallies ; flocks and herds,  
The verdant forests and the golden grain,  
The humble cot and richly-sculptur’d dome  
In one far-spreading ruin are involv’d ;  
Soon the troubled squadrons of the foe  
Israel collect’d rush’d, their sturdy spears  
Crimson’d in blood, whilst their resounding bows  
A deadly show’r discharg’d : for still the seer,  
Who smote the waters with his potent rod,  
Uplifted wav’d it in the charmed air ;  
And as the falcon from her towering height  
Stoops to her master’s lure, so to the hand  
Of Moses Victory eagle-wing’d came down  
From the bright empyrean, where she sate  
At the right hand of Him, who is the God  
Of battle, and alighted on the helm

Of Israel's chief, invincible the whilst.

But soon, when Moses could no more uprear  
His hands, from age grown heavy, as they sunk,  
So sunk the ebbing fortune of the fight ;  
The rallying hordes press'd sore upon the front  
Of Israel's battle, ill prepar'd to meet  
So fierce an onset, and their courage quail'd.  
As when at midnight ravenous wolves assail  
A troop of wandering pilgrims, if they find  
Their rage repell'd, with galling wounds provok'd  
And madden'd to despair, they turn, they stand,  
Then rush on their pursuers, and the field  
With mingled streams of gore is all o'erspread ;  
So with new courage by revenge inspir'd,  
And with the sharp upbraidings of their king  
Urg'd to repair their shame, the pagan host,  
Reckless of life, with imprecations loud  
And yelling cries and shouts and dying groans,  
Mad as dæmoniacs, rush'd into the fight.

Unnumber'd deeds of valour now were wrought,



And many a gallant combatant was left  
Stretcht on th' ensanguin'd plain. With batter'd casque,  
And mailed corselet, trencht with many a gash,  
All bath'd in blood Elishama was seen  
Hewing his passage through the ranks, that fell  
Before the whirl of his wide-wasting sword,  
As the light stubble to the mower's scythe,  
Leaving a swathe behind : hoarse was his voice  
With calling out on Amalek ; o'erspent  
With toil and wounds and at the point to sink,  
The red stream oozing through his armour's chinks,  
Still terrible he was : him Omar saw  
'Midst piles of slain, where most the battle rag'd,  
Gasping for breath, and now an easy prey :  
Swift flew the javelin from his forceful arm,  
And sure its aim, if Caleb on his shield  
Had not receiv'd the death-encharged stroke,  
Whilst his stout comrades, ever prompt to save  
Their valiant leader, bore him from the field.  
With rage, resentment, disappointment stung,

“Avenge me, Chemos ! the fierce Arab cried ;  
Grant my vext spirit vengeance, mighty god !  
So shall thy steaming altars be regal’d  
With hecatombs of these Egyptian slaves.  
Come forth, thou stripling, and receive thy death,  
Honour too great, for Omar deals the blow.”

“Vain is your threat, said Caleb, vain your vow,  
For your deaf idol hears not. Know withal,  
The stripling, you despise, can trace descent,  
If that were merit, nobler than thine own.  
Thousands amongst these ranks there may be found  
Than me more worthy, but for thee, thou boaster !  
Caleb, a private warrior, will suffice.”

He said, and onwards rush’d : on his broad shield  
The spear of Omar shiver’d in his hand,  
Whilst, as his fiery courser held his way,  
Caleb his falchion rear’d, and on the side  
Of the fierce chieftain struck with mortal aim.—  
Deep in his entrails sunk the trenchant blade ;  
In a black torrent gush’d the blood, his eyes

Roll'd in convulsive agony, and down  
Down from his warrior steed, with his last breath  
Arraigning his false gods, to earth he fell.  
'There as he prostrate lay, welt'ring in blood,  
His casque with leaves of writhed gold begirt,  
The trophy of his conquest, Caleb seiz'd—  
“ High heav'n be prais'd ! exultingly he cried,  
Now are Jephunneh's vows fulfill'd, and now  
In his son's triumph shall his age rejoice.  
He charg'd me to remember my descent,  
And prove myself deserving of his care.  
When he shall see this trophy, with delight  
His swelling heart shall glow, and hail the gift.”

Loud were the shouts from Israel's host upsent,  
And now, by Caleb led o'er piles of slain,  
They hew'd their way, nor from the carnage ceas'd,  
Till o'er the plain dispersing far and wide  
The routed squadrons spread—This Moses saw,  
And as with interceding hands uprais'd  
Trembling he stood—“ Assist me, friends, he cried,

My old frame totters ; these extended arms,  
If not by you upheld, again will droop,  
And with them Israel's fortune. On each side  
Aaron, and you our brother, the espous'd  
Of Miriam, come ; support me, or I sink !"—  
On the broad fragment of a rock they plac'd  
The aged prophet, and his arms sustain'd.

His general slaughter'd and his host dismay'd  
When Amalek perceiv'd, impetuous rage  
His proud heart swell'd and seiz'd his madd'ning brain,  
And venting imprecations on his gods,  
His soldiers and his foe, disdaining flight,  
And lost to every sense but of revenge,  
He stopt, he turn'd, and thus to Israel's host  
In vaunting terms his bold defiance hurl'd.

“ Slaves of the race of Jacob, if your ranks  
Contain one chief, whose station may aspire,  
Tho' but at distance, in my sight to stand,  
Let him come forth ! It is Arabia's king,  
'Tis Amalek, who dares him to the fight.”

As thus he spake, with sudden awe impress'd  
And silent Israel's foremost warriors stood,  
So vast his bulk appear'd, so fierce his mien.  
On them not answering scornfully he gaz'd,  
And in still louder and more taunting phrase  
His challenge 'gan repeat, when from the ranks,  
Where in the front of Judah's van he fought,  
Joshua impetuous rush'd, and thus exclaim'd—

“ In me behold the chief of Israel's host,  
Who through the thickest of the fight have sought,  
And now have found thee, Amalek. Descend  
From thy proud steed, if so thy courage prompt,  
And on the level champaign, where I stand,  
In equal combat let us fairly prove  
Whose sword is keenest, Joshua's or thine.”

“ Now take my answer, Amalek replied,  
Lo ! it is ready. At the word he couch'd  
His well-aim'd lance, and with the lightning's speed  
Rush'd on his challenger ; the furious blade  
Glanc'd from the polisht orb of Joshua's shield,

And spent its force in air : th' infuriate king  
Drew his bright falchion forth, and from his steed  
Leapt on the sounding soil : in burnisht gold  
Studded with gems the mailed terror stood  
Gigantic, towering o'er the subject heads  
Of his dismounted captains, who fell back  
And hail'd him with their loud applauding shouts.

As when on savage Barca's torrid soil,  
Two lordly lions, in the caves remote  
Of the wild desert nurtur'd, each to each  
Oppos'd, prepare the mastery to dispute,  
'Their eyeballs glare, they lash their yellow sides,  
'The distant forests echo with their roar,  
And bloody torrents float the sandy waste ;  
So dreadful stood the chiefs, whilst all around  
The battle paus'd, and awful silence reign'd.

Here in the tawny Arab might be seen  
Grandeur and strength Herculean, there a form,  
Where health and youth and manly beauty glow'd ;  
This born to rule by terror, that by love.

And now they meet, they strike ; their riven mails  
At every gash discharge a crimson stream :  
When lo ! dissever'd by a thund'ring stroke  
Of Amalek's fell blade, the lion-crest  
Of Joshua's helm was rent—Loud was the shout  
Barbaric : Israel trembled for her chief.  
Again the giant king his falchion rear'd,  
As if at once the contest to conclude,  
When Joshua instantly his 'vantage spied,  
And, springing forward, underneath the guard  
Of his uplifted cuirass plung'd his sword  
Deep to his heart : prone to the earth he fell,  
And lay outstretcht ; his heaving bosom breath'd  
One deep-drawn sigh, and from his gushing wound  
The stream, that fed his mighty spirit, burst.  
“Joy to my friend ! exulting Caleb cried,  
And press'd the panting warrior in his arms,  
Joy to the champion of Jehovah's host !  
So perish Israel's foes ! Behold, they fly ;  
They leave their king, their thousands on the field,

And their fears deem their swiftest speed too slow.”

“ Draw, bowmen, draw ! Gamaliel loud exclaim’d,  
Pour on their coward heads an iron shower,  
For death alone can overtake their flight.  
But now our hero’s bleeding wounds to staunch,  
And guard a life, our Israel’s proudest boast,  
Demands our instant care.”—This said, he turn’d  
A look of tenderest pity on the chief,  
Who now by Caleb and by him upheld,  
His batter’d helmet whilst brave Nahshon bore,  
With steps slow-dragging o’er the soil retir’d.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.





## BOOK THE THIRD.

### ARGUMENT.

*THE Amalekites are dispersed—Joshua, being wounded in the battle, is visited by Moses and is healed—The altar Jehovah-nissi is built—Perpetual war with Amalek is denounced—Korah confers with the son of Peleth and declaims against Moses—Jethro arrives with the wife and two sons of Moses—Moses entertains him—Jethro addresses the People and departs—Moses admonishes Korah of his danger—The People come to Sinai—They are prepared against the third day—The fearful presence of God upon the mount—Moses receives from God the ten commandments, and recites them to the People.*



# THE EXODIAD.

## BOOK THE THIRD.

THE fight was o'er ; the victors kept the field,  
The vanquisht to their mountain-holds were fled  
On their swift horses, broken and dispers'd :  
Silent they straggled o'er the sandy waste ;  
Horror in every face, on every side  
Their wounded comrades writhing in the dust  
Where was their vaunting ? Where the proud array  
And martial pomp, in which they issu'd forth  
Under the standard of their haughty king,  
Now number'd with the dead ? Israel the whilst

Stood firm, and with the clarion's loud recall  
Gave warning to the legions to forbear  
Fruitless pursuit : the archer slung his bow,  
The weary soldier rested on his spear,  
And from the barrier-top, where he had sat  
Spectator of the fight, Moses came down  
To hail the victory, purchas'd by his prayers.

Led by Ahiezer, the halted tribes  
Rush'd through the rocky pass, and fill'd the plain,  
Where, as at first, the host four-fronted stood.  
Through all the ranks of Judah ran the cry—  
“ Why comes not Joshua forth ? What stays the chief ?  
Where is our leader ? What unhappy chance  
Forbids us to behold him, to embrace  
His knees, and crown him with applauding shouts ? ”

“ Faint are the hopes I cherish, Nahshon said,  
And sad the tidings I must needs report  
Of life so dear to Israel ”—“ Cease complaint,  
Moses exclaim'd, (for unobserv'd his ear  
Had caught the mournful words) let none despair :

God is all merciful"—and forth he went  
To seek him and to ask his life of God,  
For much he lov'd the man. There when he came,  
Stretcht on his couch the fainting hero lay ;  
There too Elishama, all o'er besprent  
With blood, and gasht with honourable wounds,  
In death-like trance was wrapp'd. Beside the couch,  
Watching the languid breathings of his friend,  
In sad and pensive silence Caleb sate :  
The outer-tent display'd an armed throng  
Of warrior-princes, anxious to enquire  
The fate of their brave champion, whilst around  
Great was the press ; for there upon his bier  
Arabia's king, in golden armour clad,  
A corpse gigantic, was expos'd to view ;  
Frowning he laid, and dreadful e'en in death.

Moses approach'd : the princes and the chiefs  
Fell back and left him passage—" Hail, they cried,  
Favour'd of Heav'n, all hail ! Father, entreat  
The Lord of mercy for thy dying son ;

Let not the light of Israel be put out :  
Oh, enter and restore him !” “ What am I,  
Moses replied, to ask the life of man,  
The limit of whose days is with the Lord ?  
To whom is Joshua dearer than to me ?  
Therefore retire ; encroach not on the tent :  
It may be God shall listen to my prayer,  
And our dear friend shall live.”—This said, he pass’d  
In silence on ; Caleb arose ; the seer  
Approach’d and took the sick man’s hand, and rais’d  
His tearful eyes to Heav’n—The healing charm  
In a soft breeze descended on the tent,  
And, eddying to the couch where Joshua lay,  
Breath’d its balsamic health into his veins,  
And calm’d his aching wounds ; when, as he felt  
The thrilling virtue coursing to his heart,  
As if from sleep arous’d, he started, gaz’d,  
And lo, before him stood the reverend form  
Of the heav’n-gifted seer—“ Joshua, he cried,  
The Lord, who gave thee victory, gives thee life

And health and strength renew'd. Thou must abide,  
But I must pass away : in the Lord's name  
Wond'rous will be the things that thou shalt do :  
When God hath put the word into thy heart,  
The very stars of Heav'n shall hear thy voice ;  
I see the sun stand still at thy command,  
Pois'd in the firmament. Great shalt thou be,  
When I, who bid thee live, shall live no more,  
And this mortality shall turn to dust ;  
But give not then unto thyself the praise,  
Give it to God, and glorify his name."—

Thus spake the prophet, in the spirit of God  
Revealing things to come, auspicious scenes  
Of future glory, to th' astonisht sense  
Of the reviving hero. He the whilst  
Rais'd on his couch, in fixt attention heard  
The heav'n-inspir'd disclosure of his fate,  
And, for a time abstracted, seem'd as one,  
Whose thoughts had wander'd into other worlds ;  
When after pause he thus address'd the seer.



“ But that I know thy truth, and feel the power,  
Thy presence hath to stay the hand of death,  
Cold at my heart but now, hard to believe,  
And far above my reason would appear  
The things, which thou foretellest shall be done  
Of me, a frail weak mortal ; but when now  
I rise, as if resurgent from the grave ;  
When I perceive and know that thou art he,  
Whom God hath sent to manifest his power,  
And execute his promise to the sons  
Of Jacob ; when, as in this day, I see  
His vengeance wreak’d on the rebellious hordes,  
Who hallow idol gods with rites impure,  
Can I, who live but on the breath He gives,  
Presume as of myself to think or act  
But in the furtherance of his gracious will,  
And by the aid of his almighty power ?  
What He now wills, I am ; what He decrees  
Hereafter I shall be ; when He withdraws  
My breath, I know this body shall return

To the insensate clay, of which I am.  
The glory then I gain rests not with me ;  
It cannot with corruption make abode ;  
It is not earthly, it belongs to Heaven.  
And now forgive me, gracious as thou art,  
If I presume to hope thou art not come,  
With power by God all-merciful endow'd,  
To heal me only : was it I alone,  
Who turn'd the fate of battle ? Omar fell  
By Caleb's conqu'ring sword ; his shield preserv'd  
The brave Elishama, when sinking fast  
In th' arms of victory, by his valour won :  
Turn thine eyes thither, and behold the wreck  
Of him, so dreadful to the foes of God.  
Shall I revive, and must that hero die ?  
Oh brave Elishama, thy manly breast  
Still heaves in agony, whilst mine is free ;  
Thy gaping wounds still open their dumb mouths,  
And plead to share the balm, that makes me whole."  
He said, and on the meek diviner cast

Such a beseeching look, and dropt a tear  
On his pale cheek so eloquently mute,  
That Moses, eager to assuage his grief,—  
“ Fear not, my son, replied : God will forgive  
The importunity of him, who pleads  
For an afflicted brother, and I feel,  
By the impressive witness in my heart,  
That thy accepted pray’r is with the Lord,  
And will bring down like healing with thine own.  
Though sorely wounded is Manasseh’s chief,  
And deep the trance, that locks his senses up,  
His sleep is not to death ; and know withal,  
That he, who eats of that celestial dew,  
Which angels feed upon, hath in his blood  
An antidote so pure, that, though the sword  
May gash, no canker can infect the wound.  
And now arise !”—This said, he took the hand  
Of the delighted chief, and rais’d him up.  
Erect the hero stood : him Caleb saw,  
And his brave heart with generous transport glow’d.

Forth from the tent they issu'd, and behold  
An altar, so ordain'd of Moses, stood  
In centre of the plain. Hither they came,  
And thus, when all was still, the prophet spake—  
“ Sacred to GOD OUR BANNER we erect  
This tributary altar, to record  
To after-ages, that we gave the praise  
To Him, JEHOVAH-NISSI, in whose name  
We fought and conquer'd. Now let Israel hear  
What He, the judge all-righteous, hath decreed :  
No peace shall be with Amalek. He died,  
As he had liv'd, in blood ; his sin is rank ;  
His bold defiance of the Lord your God  
Hath from the book of mercy struck his name,  
And Israel must not make forbidden truce  
With his apostate hordes, who, from the faith  
Of holy Abr'ham swerving, hath decreed  
Altars, oblations, rites profane and vile  
To Chemos, and renounc'd his father's God :  
Too long hath his intolerable pride

Been suffer'd to usurp the bleeding earth,  
And tread the nations down ; the sun, the moon  
And the chaste stars have sicken'd to behold  
Crimes so unnatural, orgies so accurst :  
Therefore, O Joshua, in the name of Him,  
Who gave thee life and victory, I require,  
That on this altar thou shalt lay thine hand,  
And swear, that whilst thou hold'st command supreme  
Over the armies of the living God,  
Thou never wilt admit into thy peace  
The impious race of Amalek."—He said ;  
The chief approach'd, the solemn vow was pledg'd,  
The ministers levitical retir'd,  
And evening warn'd the weary host to rest.

Not so with Korah. Envy knows no rest ;  
Rebellion will not let the eyelids close  
In peaceful slumbers. He had heard the words  
Of Moses, and his malice straight devis'd  
A specious argument, whereby to build  
Treach'rous conclusions on fair-seeming truths :

For there are men so impiously perverse,  
They will arraign the providence of God,  
When He forbears to punish ; when He strikes,  
Dispute his justice, and affect to find  
In their own hearts more mercy than in Heaven.

Soon as the morning dawn'd the assembled tribes  
Across Rephidim's plain, whence all were fled,  
Tow'rd Sinai's desert northward turn'd their course,  
When to the son of Peleth in the front  
Of Reuben, where he march'd, thus Korah spake—

“ Warrior, you see how fast the nations sink  
Before our conqu'ring standard ; you have heard  
The doom of Amalck, by him pronounc'd,  
Who is our Israel's oracle, and seal'd  
By Joshua on God's altar with an oath.  
Not one must live of Esau's hapless race ;  
Nor age, nor sex, nor innocence can save,  
But e'en the harmless nursling at the breast  
Must perish with the mother, dreadful doom !  
If this be so as Moses hath decreed,

And general carnage is announc'd from Heav'n,  
Where shall we look for mercy ? Have these plains  
Not drank so deeply of their masters' blood,  
But we must drain from infants their small store,  
And wring the last faint drop from wrinkled age,  
To perfect a libation full and fit—  
What shall I say ? For God ?—No, God forbid !  
For Moses, for a plume of deeper dye  
To crown the helm of Joshua, and replace  
That crest, which Amalek's keen falchion cleft ?  
The sentence I have heard, but tell me now,  
For I am yet to learn, what is the sin  
Of this unhappy people : in past time  
Jacob did homage to them, brought them gifts,  
As to his brethren of the elder stock :  
They envied not his store, they had enough,  
And but for his entreaty had declin'd  
The tributary offerings of his flock :  
They were the stronger then ; his wives, his babes,  
His all was in their pow'r ; but they were kind

And merciful, and to our fathers gave  
That peace, which to their sons we now deny.  
What if the gods they worship be no gods,  
They do but follow where their fathers trode,  
And what they taught believe ; if so they sin,  
Then is obedience guilt. Moses to them  
Is not a lawgiver, hath not divulg'd,  
As unto us, his conference with God  
At Horeb's mount ; and, if he had, perchance  
He might have found them of less easy faith  
Than we, the humblest of his subjects, are,  
Not daring of ourselves to act, or speak,  
Or think but as he wills, who makes revenge  
A virtue, and to desolate mankind  
A sacrifice acceptable to Heaven—.”

Thus spake the glozing hypocrite, and strove  
With the vain mock'ry of compassion, feign'd,  
Not felt, to varnish o'er his rancour foul.—

“ Father, replied the chief, with me and some  
Of Reuben's elder tribe, who weigh men's words,



All is not oracle, that Moses speaks.  
When cruelty is sanction'd, I must doubt,  
If what I'm taught to think that God abhors,  
And human reason starts from, can be right ;  
Therefore my sword shall sleep within its shell,  
And Moses must not rail if I refuse  
To stab the wretch, that kneels to me for life,  
Or mingle blood of babes with mothers' milk,  
Although some young idolater may live  
To sacrifice to Chemos. If the will  
Of God had been to exterminate the race,  
His pestilence had swept them from the earth,  
And cruelties more dire, than ere disgrac'd  
The worshippers of Moloch had been spar'd.  
I and my tribe without the barrier stood ;  
We heard the din of arms, but neither shar'd,  
Nor saw the battle. We are not of those,  
Whom Moses favours ; Joshua hath his heart,  
And Judah holds possession of the van.  
I saw the corpse of Amalek expos'd

Before the conqu'ror's tent : I envied not  
His fame, nor Caleb's, nor the glorious wounds  
Of brave Elishama ; alike conceal'd  
The quarrel and the contest were from me."—

He paus'd ; when Korah, eager to secure  
A proselyte, so apt to catch the spark  
By his imposing sophistry struck out,  
And kindle into open discontent,  
Thus with fresh spleen resum'd his taunting theme—

“ Ambition urges rival states to war ;  
Men fight for spoil, for plunder, for increase  
Of commerce and dominion—These at least  
Are motives natural to man, deprav'd  
And sensual as he is ; but who will say  
What by this causeless quarrel we have gain'd ?  
What we have lost the very dead can tell :  
The fathers, husbands, sons, untimely slain,  
Over whose graves their weeping relicts mourn,  
Now occupy the only tract of soil,  
That we have won from Amalek ; but we,

Regardless of their sorrows, we pass on  
Exulting in our conquest, and erect  
An altar to our God, where we should leave  
A pile funereal to our slaughter'd friends.  
Why do men whet the sword and point the spear,  
Reason will ask ? Why are there wars on earth ?  
Experience answers—Evil deeds prevail  
Because the world is evil. Tell me then,  
If war be evil, is it not a crime  
'To say, that God, whose goodness none can doubt,  
Hath counsell'd against peace ? It cannot be.  
If Moses be indeed what he affirms,  
The shepherd, chosen of the Lord to lead  
His flock to pasture in a land, that flows  
With milk and honey, should he seek to turn  
His lambs to wolves, and fatten them on blood ?  
The meek should study peace, the godly man  
Should conquer by instruction, and the priest  
Should consecrate his labours to the good  
And welfare of mankind ; but now, alas !

When armies, countless as the sand, and war  
In all its horrors, are let loose, our tombs  
Will be the trophies, by which after-times  
Shall trace our progress to the promis'd land."—

More he had said, for malice without stint  
Was in his heart, and venom flow'd as fast  
To his oil'd tongue as to the adder's tooth,  
But here the traitor paus'd, for now all eyes  
Were northward turn'd, where, journeying o'er the waste  
From Midian's confines, an extended line  
Of pastoral Arabs came with flocks and droves  
In peaceful order ; upon sight whereof  
The army halted, when an aged priest,  
The father of his horde, on his meek ass  
Rode forth, and gave the greeting of a friend—

If Moses liv'd, he will'd them to report  
That Jethro was his name ; that she, who sate  
Veil'd on her camel in the rank behind,  
Was Zipporah his daughter and the wife,  
Whom Moses had espous'd in Midian's land,

When there he sojourn'd, and with her were come  
His two sons, anxious to embrace his knees,  
And supplicate the blessing, long withheld.

Thus in unstudied phrase, distinct and brief,  
The holy stranger to the army's chief  
Detail'd his errand ; he in courteous sort  
Gave him fair welcome, and assurance full  
That all to him belonging should be safe :  
-The females in his train should pass secure  
To Moses, station'd in the army's rear :  
They need not fear offence by word or look,  
For Caleb should escort them—" Is it then  
To Joshua I am list'ning, Jethro cried ?  
Your action marks assent. Now Heav'n be prais'd !  
For great, O Joshua, hath been my desire,  
That with mine eyes I might behold that face,  
Which in my visions I have seen, and heard  
Auspicious voices hailing thee by name,  
For Israel's glory, the elect of God.  
Truly, my son, the Lord hath laid his hand

Upon the goodliest of the sons of men,  
And grac'd with beauty what he crowns with fame."—

He said ; the modest hero turn'd aside  
His eyes in silence, and to Caleb's care  
Consign'd the charge of Jethro and his train,  
Then bow'd his head in rev'rence, and retir'd.  
Slowly they journey'd onwards through the ranks  
With eyes uplifted, as if nought could stir  
Their curiosity below the clouds ;  
Solemn, deliberate men—And now the sun  
Had dipp'd his golden orb into the west,  
When Caleb stopp'd, and thus to Jethro spake—

“ Father, 'tis now the hour of evening prayer,  
And nearer access may not be allow'd  
To those, who form thy train, till that be pass'd ;  
But thou, whose function is before the Lord,  
A priest in Midian, holy and approv'd,  
Thou, if it be thy pleasure to alight  
From off thy beast, may'st enter and behold  
The face of Moses ; I the whilst will wait

Here with thy company." This said, the sage  
Observant of the word, dismounted straight  
And stood ; then, lifting up his hands, he cried—  
" The Lord be blessed ! Let his will be done.  
Well hast thou said, my son. My harmless folk  
Will not offend against your holy forms."—  
When straight the trumpet gave the warning blast,  
'That now the chaunting of the evening prayer  
Was to commence : then came the elders forth  
With Moses and with Aaron at their head :  
The congregated Levites knelt around,  
And loudly thus their solemn pray'r rehears'd.—  
" Lord of all mercy, give thy people rest,  
And as thy sun now hastens to descend,  
So much the rather let thy living light  
Shine in our hearts, that we may know thy truth,  
Thy pow'r, thy providence and praise thy name.  
Send, gracious Lord, thy dew upon the earth  
This night, as thou art wont, to be our bread  
In this bare wilderness ; and as thy food

Sustains our bodies, let our faith in thee  
Support our constancy in all attempts  
By evil counsels to estrange our minds  
From thy pure worship: as thy hand, O Lord,  
Hath from the house of bondage led us forth,  
So from the various perils of our march,  
Whether of thirst, of famine or of foe,  
Protect us in thy mercy, and inspire  
Thy people's hearts with patience to abide  
The fullness of thy time, when of the land,  
To our forefathers promis'd, we their sons,  
In thee confiding, may at length obtain  
Lasting possession, and repose in peace."—

The pray'r was ended ; the assembly rose,  
And darkness 'gan to steal upon the world :  
With folded arms, in meditation deep  
Revolving in his thoughts the awful scene,  
The priest of Midian stood. Him Moses saw,  
And disengaging from the crowd, approach'd—  
“ Blest of the Lord, my father, may'st thou be,”



The prophet cried, and gave the filial kiss,  
And bow'd the head and paid obeisance due.  
As from a trance new-waken'd, for a time  
In solemn silence Jethro stood, and gaz'd  
Upon the alter'd features of the seer,  
'Time-stricken now, and yet more deeply mark'd  
With cares and weary watchings ; when at length—  
“ All hail, my son !” the aged hierarch cried,  
And spread his arms, and press'd him to his heart,  
And wept upon his neck—“ Father, forbear !  
Moses replied ; alas ! thou hast endur'd  
A tedious pilgrimage to see the wreck  
Of a storm-beaten vessel, and thine age,  
Like my exhausted strength, must need repose.  
Behold the tent ; and lo ! where Caleb comes  
With those, whom God hath giv'n me, and thy care  
Hath foster'd in my absence : scenes like these,  
Which call the feelings up, should be reserv'd  
For sacred privacy, and well I know  
In Midian your propriety forbids

The eye of man to rest upon the face  
Of the unveiled matron : enter then  
Thou and thy welcome charge ! Here we may trust  
The heart to its affections, and exchange  
Those mutual fond enquiries, that to friends  
Long parted in such numbers will occur.”—

No more, for now with Zipporah and her sons,  
Gershom and Eliezer Caleb came,  
And to the hand of Moses, who had stopp’d  
In the tent-door, resign’d them and withdrew.

After due time for nature to express  
Those soft emotions, which the joyful sight  
Of objects so belov’d might well inspire,  
Jethro, who saw that time and place were fit  
To tell the purpose of his coming, now,  
When all were seated, thus to Moses spake—

“ When to my ear the wond’rous tidings came  
Of what had pass’d in Egypt, where the Lord,  
For ever blessed be His name ! had arm’d  
Thy hand with pow’r miraculous to strike

The harden'd heart of Pharaoh, and redeem  
From long captivity in Goshen's land  
His chosen tribes, conviction smote my mind,  
That 'twas indeed the voice of God Himself,  
Which call'd to thee from Horeb to come forth,  
And leave all lesser duties to perform,  
As at this day, thy heav'n-appointed task.  
At once I saw thee resolute to slight  
The trust of all my store, and break those ties,  
Which nature sanctions and thy vows had pledg'd.  
If then I held thee in respect less kind  
Than I were wont to do, impute it not :  
A father's feelings plead in my excuse ;  
'Thy wife, thy children in my hands were left :  
It seem'd to me as if thou wert possest  
With thoughts beyond thyself. Tears could not move,  
Nor intercessions stay thee. 'Thou hadst heard  
A voice ; but when I urg'd thee to reveal  
What wond'rous thing thou had'st in charge to do,  
'Thou said'st it was a secret betwixt Heav'n

And thine own heart, and pray'd me to desist :  
I ccas'd, I yielded ; for I fear'd the Lord.  
Zipporah can witness for me if thenceforth  
My lips e'er utter'd murmur or reproach ;  
No, Heav'n be prais'd, though all to me was dark,  
Patient I waited till the light broke forth :  
Then came the wond'rous embryo to the birth,  
Then Egypt witness'd those portentous plagues,  
That smote her cities, palaces and fields,  
Made the air deadly and the noon-day dark,  
Till suffering Nature could endure no more,  
But shrieking out with all a mother's pangs,  
Prevail'd to save a remnant of her sons,  
And stay the scourge of thy wide-wasting rod.  
Then, then I knew no mortal of himself  
Could do the mighty things that thou had'st done :  
Strictly I search'd my heart if ever doubt  
Had left a guilty recollection there,  
And humbly pray'd forgiveness. Thus confirm'd,  
Behold I come to manifest my faith

In thy divine legation, and to hail  
Thine Israel, emergent from the waves,  
Under the fiery ensign of the Lord  
Marching triumphant o'er this wilderness  
To its predestin'd portion in the land,  
Where God's high temple on His mount shall rise,  
And His great name be sounded through the world."

Thus spake the priest of Midian, whilst his voice  
Swell'd to prophetic rapture, as the scene  
Of future glories dawn'd upon his sight ;  
When thus with mild composure Moses spake—

“ Rightly you judge that nature never bred,  
Nor learning foster'd, attributes in man,  
That might achieve those wonders, which surpass  
All pow'r but of the Lord. Me you have known  
The keeper of your flock, an exil'd man,  
And to my proper nation hardly known :  
I eat your bread, and gave, 'twas all I could—  
My daily labour : when I took to wife  
Your daughter, no inheritance had I :

Friendless, the wide world had not where for me,  
Save by your charity, to rest my head.  
No grace had I, no hope of better days  
Gleam'd in my view. Ambition builds her nest  
In souls of lofty pitch, whence she may launch  
Her flight high-soaring and attempt the clouds.  
It was not so with me ; my lowly thoughts  
Ne'er reach'd above the shepherd's simple life :  
The desert was my lot ; thy flock my care,  
And leading them to pasture at the foot  
Of Horeb's mount, there was I found of God,  
Who by the meanness of his agent marks  
His acts how mighty. From a cloud He spake,  
And gave commandment : in a cloud we came,  
Marshall'd by miracles, from Goshen's land.  
Through the Red Sea we march'd ; Pharaoh pursued,  
And perish'd in the gulph : by God's command  
O'er the uplifted waves I stretch'd my rod,  
And they fell down ; we stood and view'd the wreck.  
Over the sandy waste we held our way ;

The people thirsted where no water was ;  
God heard their cry and gave them their desire :  
They hunger'd, and their stores of food were spent,  
The Lord had pity, and the dews of Heaven  
Are to this hour all Israel's daily bread :  
We cross'd Rephidim's plain ; nor man, nor beast,  
Nor e'en the trodden sand, o'er which we pass'd,  
Had harm or wrong of us : with furious threats  
The tyrants of the soil oppos'd our march,  
And Amalek drew all his warriors forth :  
On their fleet coursers with the whirlwind's speed  
Their thund'ring squadrons rush'd upon our host :  
We fought, we conquer'd, for the Lord was with us,  
And to the unflesht sword of Joshua gave  
The triumph of that day : their monarch slain,  
Their barbarous hordes dispers'd, and all the tract  
'Twixt this and Midian clear, secure you pass  
Their hostile borders, and we meet in peace."—

“Then is the day of vengeance come at last,  
And blest for evermore be Israel's God,

Jethro replied, for He hath giv'n us rest  
From these idolaters, than whom the earth,  
Fertile in monsters, doth not aught contain  
So savage, so athirst for human blood.  
At length their horrid blasphemies are heard,  
At length their impious orgies and the yells  
Of their infuriate zealots have call'd down  
The long-suspended judgment. If to them  
Mercy had been continued, we had heard  
Impious opinions spread about the world,  
And boldly vouch'd, that man could not offend,  
That murder, spoil and rapine were no crimes,  
And Chemos had the earth at his command.  
But Israel's God, who is the Lord of Hosts,  
Hath drawn His armies forth, and put the sword  
Of heav'nly justice in the hand of man.  
No creature, that had life, might pass their haunts :  
All nature was their prey ; on every hill,  
In every hollow of the earth they couch'd ;  
Their scent was as the vulture's keen for blood,



Swift as the eagle's flight was their pursuit,  
They sprung as doth the lion, and their cry  
Was horrid as the gaunt hyæna's howl :  
About their altars the blood-sprinkled ground  
Shew'd like a charnel-house, with ghastly bones,  
The reliques of their impious offerings, strewn ;  
And who but must adore the righteous doom  
Of an avenging God, when He expels  
Monsters like these from the affrighted earth ?"—

Here as he paus'd, an intervening sigh  
Burst from the bosom of the conscious seer,  
Who knew how deep conspiracy had work'd  
Into the hearts of some, and mourn'd the doom,  
Impendent on their guilt—" Father, he cried,  
You are a priest in Midian, and the life  
Your peaceful people pass amongst their flocks,  
Inspires simplicity : they have not learnt  
The sophistry of Egypt, have not dwelt  
In Goshen's land, environ'd with a swarm  
Of brute divinities, who haunt the stream,

Or graze the banks of Nile : you love your God,  
Revere His judgments and observe His laws :  
Alas ! for Israel : 'tis not so with them ;  
And Heav'n have mercy upon me your son,  
Who am at once the servant of the Lord,  
And yet in pity intercede for those,  
Of whose sins, when I cease to be the judge,  
I am partaker in the sight of Heaven.  
Wonder not then, if when you bring before me  
These soft affinities of wife and sons,  
My heart preoccupied can find no room  
To entertain one joy, that might allay  
The pressure of the burden that I bear.  
The bread, that you have brought, must be your food ;  
Our manna is the Lord's : to you and these  
This tent will be for rest. I must away ;  
My calls are from without. I shall forbid  
To-morrow's march, and give the host repose :  
The third day we must reassume our toil,  
And you must part—Ah Zipporah ! Ah my sons !

Me miserable ! never will the hours return,  
'That we have known in Midian. Pisgah's mount  
Bounds my horison : there at once I see  
The rising and the setting of my sun."

He said, and parted. The prophetic words  
Sunk to the heart of Zipporah ; she sigh'd,  
And, whilst the tear hung on her faded cheek,  
She smote her hands and mournfully exclaim'd—  
" It is God's will, and let His will be done— !"  
When thus the father—" Be content, my child.  
Though dead to thee thy husband, to the Lord  
He lives, and is His servant. Now no more !  
Get thee to rest. I shall walk forth a space,  
And in the contemplation of His works  
Visit the Lord in spirit : it may be,  
He shall inform me of His gracious will,  
That when to-morrow Moses shall require  
That I address the people, I may speak,  
The words, that God shall put into my heart,  
And before Israel glorify his name."

Now Night her star-bespangled zone had spread  
Over Heav'n's vault, when Moses sought the tent  
Of Korah, for he knew his rash discourse  
With Peleth's son, and trembled for his fate.  
There, by the light of one pale glimm'ring lamp,  
Sullen and sad the musing traitor sate :  
His patient consort, silent and apart,  
Watch'd him with fearful look, whilst at her feet  
Two infant boys play'd on the matted floor.  
At sight of Moses the aw'd matron rose—  
“ Not so, he cried ; arise not from your seat,  
Nor let these innocents be robb'd of sleep.”—  
Surpris'd and conscience-stricken Korah sprung  
Upon his feet, and eagerly exclaim'd—  
“ Why art thou come ? What vengeance to denounce  
On me, on her and these devoted babes,  
Who are thy kindred, but not thou their friend.”—  
“ You wrong me, Korah ; I am much their friend,  
In accent mild and by his taunts unmov'd,  
Moses replied. Behold, once more I come

For the last time to warn you of your doom.  
You have arraign'd the judgments of the Lord,  
And talk'd of Amalek, as if the wrath,  
Which is denounc'd on his blaspheming race,  
Were not of them deserv'd. If in your heart  
There be so much compassion for the sinful,  
Why not for these your infants and your wife,  
Who have not sinn'd, and yet must share your doom,  
When ruin falls upon you ? 'Tis not well,  
'That thus you tempt the vengeance of your God.  
Am I not then your friend, your children's friend,  
The friend of all that's dear to you, when thus,  
Planting myself betwixt Heav'n's wrath and you,  
I warn you to repent ?"—" I do repent,  
Korah indignant cried, of many a fault,  
To which, by weak credulity betray'd,  
I now look back with shame : I do repent  
That ever I was dup'd by flattering hopes  
To dream of freedom in some happier clime,  
And wander forth with these from Goshen's land

To perish in the wilderness : of this  
I from my heart repent ; but when I hear  
Unsparring vengeance vow'd, and the decree  
Ascrib'd to God all-merciful, if then  
I hold the vouch'd authority in doubt,  
Of that, O Moses, I do not repent."—

To him the prophet—" Since thou wilt persist  
Thus to uphold thy judgment, the appeal  
Must be referr'd to God. If I have dar'd  
To falsify his mandate, and denounce  
Vengeance unauthoriz'd upon the race  
Of Amalek, let Israel take up stones,  
And be your hand the first to hurl them on me :  
And now tow'rds Sinai we direct our march ;  
There on His holy mount if God shall deign  
After some wond'rous manner to come down,  
And manifest to all that I am His,  
And speak by His commandment, then beware  
How you provoke rebellion in His host,  
Defame His servant and dispute His laws ;

For know, obdurate man, I cannot then  
Presume, as now, to intercede with God  
Longer to stay His vengeance from a wretch,  
Who braves destruction and defies his judge.”—

Thus as he spake in deep and awful tone,  
His voice, as with a solemn horror, shook ;  
Whilst on the mother and her sleeping babes  
He cast a look so mournful, that her soul  
Sunk in despair, and when he turn'd to part,  
She felt as if forsaken of all hope,  
And would have knelt to stay him, had not then  
The eye of her stern husband glanc'd upon her,  
And look'd her motionless—Alas for thee,  
Sad mother ! who, that has a heart, and reads  
Thy piteous story, can refuse a tear,  
Although we trust, when Innocence went down,  
And the earth shut her mouth upon thy babes,  
That, whilst they shar'd a guilty father's doom,  
For them there yet was mercy in the pit ?

Now dawn'd the day, when from his humble couch

The priest of Midian rose, and tow'rd's the east  
Look'd forth to hail the blest return of light,  
And chaunt his early oraisons, when lo !  
In the mid space before his tent he spied  
An altar by the Levites rais'd of stones  
Rude and unfashion'd by the mason's tool ;  
And there intent upon the work, behold,  
Moses and Aaron stood : them to accost,  
And pay his homage to the God he serv'd,  
Rob'd in appropriate vesture, as beseem'd  
His sacerdotal function, forth he came ;  
When Aaron thus—" To thee our honour'd guest,  
Right holy and approv'd, your kindred we,  
The sons of Jacob, consecrate this pile,  
As a memorial of your visit paid  
Here in the wilderness to us your friends.  
And now behold, our offerings are prepar'd,  
And solemn intercession will be made  
To grant thee safe return and peaceful days  
In Midian, where thou dwell'st before the Lord.



These ceremonies ended, we expect  
That to the congregation thou wilt speak  
What to thy judgment and the sapient grace,  
In which we know thee gifted, may seem meet  
For our instruction, and the general good  
Of all this people, who attend to hear.”—

He said ; devout and silent Jethro heard,  
And on his forehead humbly press’d his hand,  
And bow’d obeisant, marking his assent.  
When pray’r was ended, and the people stood  
In silent expectation, Aaron turn’d  
To the sage Midianite, and led him forth,  
Where from the altar step he might be seen  
And heard of the assembly ; when at once,  
As if with sudden inspiration fill’d,  
His head uncover’d and his silv’ry locks  
Loose and surrender’d to the passing breeze,  
He spread his arms, and rais’d his eyes to Heav’n,  
And thus in tone declamatory spake—

“ Heaven is my witness how it glads my heart,

Ye men of Israel, to perceive this day,  
God, ever merciful to Abraham's seed,  
And mindful of His word, hath brought you out  
From your Egyptian bondage in his cloud,  
With signs and wonders, which your eyes beheld  
Wrought by his servant Moses for your sakes.  
Therefore across the wilderness I come,  
And here in presence of you all I stand  
Before the altar of the living God,  
Whose priest I am, to witness this great thing,  
Which He hath thus begun, and will complete,  
If ye continue faithful. Oh ! ye sons  
Of holy Jacob, when ye saw and pass'd  
Th' uplifted waters, did ye not confess  
Your God was God indeed ? Could ye then doubt  
If Egypt's idol gods were vain to save,  
When Pharaoh sunk with all his host, and you  
Look'd on, and saw him perish in the waves ?  
What is there more that ye can ask of Heav'n ?  
What other demonstration can ye need,

Where all is miracle, to fix your faith?  
Nature would sentence you to starve for want  
In this bare wilderness, and die with thirst;  
What is it but a miracle to feed  
On dew that drops from Heav'n, and drink your fill  
From the hard flint, rod-stricken by the hand  
Of him, who is the chosen of the Lord  
For your salvation? Can ye doubt if God  
Speak in his voice, who with a word controls  
The elements, puts Nature from her course,  
Makes the rock water and the waters rock,  
And does those things, which since the world had birth  
No man or woman born e'er saw or did?  
Sons of the promise, sanctify your hearts!  
Let me not plead against your unbelief,  
And call upon the mount, whence Moses came,  
To utter 'midst severer fires a voice,  
Denouncing your rebellion. Hath the Lord  
Struck down the foe of you and all mankind,  
And is there present one, who rashly dares

To murmur at the judgment, and affect  
To mourn for Amalek ? If such there be,  
Let him stand forward ; for to him I say,  
God in his mercy never freed the earth  
From pest more terrible : if pity spring  
So quick into his heart, let him direct  
Its stream to those, who can produce their claim ;  
Amongst the rest to me—My flocks, my herds,  
My unoffending people were the prey  
Of this unsparing tyrant, who ne'er felt  
One touch of pity for his fellow men ;  
And who shall feel for Amalek ? Away !  
Hence with such gross dissembling ! Mark that man,  
And purge your congregation from his stain.  
Now may the Lord direct you on your way,  
And bring you to His promis'd land in peace !  
Back to my native Midian, whence I came,  
My weary steps I must retrace—Alas !  
This wilderness is no abiding place  
For the soft charities of wife and sons :

Nor they, nor I shall e'er again behold  
The face of Moses—Servant of the Lord  
He must at once dismiss all earthly cares,  
And dedicate his heart to Heav'n and you.  
Therefore let him, who doubts his truth, beware,  
Lest when he sees the Lord, and hears His voice  
Unfolding the great pandect of His laws,  
Struck by the dread conviction, he may find  
The irreversible decree is past,  
And miserably perish. Oh ye tribes,  
Elect, if faithful! put your trust in God,  
And honour His meek prophet, who is sent  
For their deliverance, who receive his words;  
For their assur'd destruction, who reject.  
Thus far the light is with me—I have said.  
The rest is darkness."—At the word he ceas'd,  
And bow'd his head, and once more rais'd his hands,  
And bless'd the people: they with reverence due  
Paid low obeisance, whilst the choral priests  
Sung their loud hallelujahs to the Lord.

This done, the people to their tents retir'd ;  
The sun was sunk, and rest-restoring Night  
Spread her soft mantle o'er the silent camp.  
The pale moon, wand'ring through the vault of Heav'n,  
At length withdrew her interlucient lamp,  
When Moses, who with clearer prescience saw  
The awful revelation, whose approach  
Jethro, though somewhat darkly, had announc'd,  
Rose with the dawn, and to the pious sage,  
Now on the point to leave him, thus he spake—

“ Much is my soul disquieted, that you,  
My benefactor, father and my friend,  
With these my earthly blessings must depart ;  
Whilst I your son, who scarce have found an hour  
For a short welcome, now alas ! must take  
A long, a sad farewell. What shall I say ?  
If God hath call'd me forth to Sinai's mount,  
There to receive His laws, must I complain,  
And call His service hard ? That were to sin :  
That be far from me.”—“ In the name of God

Go forth, my son, the aged priest replied,  
And strain'd him to his breast. Your wife and sons  
Shall be my care, and, if the Lord permit,  
We meet again ; if not, His will be done !  
And hark ! the trumpet calls thee. Judah's van  
Is on the march ; behold, my peaceful horde  
Trail their long line slow-pac'd athwart the plain :  
See, Zipporah waves her hand ! It must be so :  
'Take then my last embrace, and in your prayers  
Remember Midian.'—More had he essay'd  
To speak, his voice had fail'd. His patient beast  
Stoop'd to receive her venerable load,  
And on he pass'd. With pensive looks awhile  
Moses pursu'd his track, then turn'd aside  
And join'd the train, that follow'd Joseph's corpse.

When after toilsome march the weary tribes  
To Sinai's wilderness had now arriv'd ;  
Moses, who by the spirit had been warn'd  
There to expect the coming of the Lord,  
Before the mountain bade his camp be spread,

And thus to Joshua spake—"Here rest awhile,  
And to the several leaders of the host,  
Captains of thousands, hundreds and of tens,  
Give order that no human foot shall pass  
The circumvallant line, that bounds the camp.  
Let every soldier see his garment cleans'd  
From soil of travel, or the stain of blood  
Spilt in the battle, and when evening prayer  
Is ended, and the trumpet warns to rest,  
Let all in silence to their tents withdraw,  
And there solicit sleep ; no council hold,  
Nor talk prolong over the nightly lamp ;  
For other light than that of yonder moon,  
Renascent in her orbit, none must be.  
Now God be with thee ! Hence, and see it done !"—

No more. The chief assenting bow'd his head ;  
The prophet in the spirit tow'rd the mount  
In awful expectation turn'd his steps.  
Thither he came, and at the rocky base  
Stopt, and shook off the sandals from his feet,



Then kneeling thus preferr'd his humble suit—

“ Lord, if it be thy token, which I feel  
Now at my conscious heart, behold me here,  
Thy soul-devoted servant, to receive,  
And by thy gracious furtherance to perform,  
What for thy people Israel here encamp'd  
Thy wisdom may ordain.”—’This said, he wrapt  
His mantle o’er his face, and on the rock  
Prostrate awaited if perchance the Lord  
Might speak as heretofore ; when soon was heard  
A voice, thus answering awfully distinct—

“ Arise, and say to Israel—Ye have seen  
What I have done to Pharaoh and his host,  
And how I bear you upon eagle’s wings,  
And brought you to myself. Now if indeed  
Ye will obey my voice, and sacred keep  
My covenant, a kingdom ye shall be  
Of priests, a holy nation, a reserve  
Peculiar, and of Me in favour held  
Above all people, that inhabit earth ;

For all that earth is mine. These are My words :  
Mark them, for these to Israel thou shalt speak.”—

The voice now ceas’d ; the heav’n-commission’d seer,  
Charg’d with the gracious oracle, conven’d  
The elders of the people, and rehears’d,  
Grave and correct, in their attentive ears  
The words, which he had heard. They, much amaz’d,  
With one voice answer’d—“ Should it please the Lord  
Again to commune with thee from the mount,  
Say, that His grateful people have receiv’d  
The wond’rous promulgation, and declare,  
That His most holy will shall be their law,  
And all that He commands them they will do.”—

“ ’Tis well, the prophet cried, this fit reply  
Bescemeth you to make and me to bear  
To that almighty Pow’r, whose promis’d love  
Your strict and prompt obedience will ensure.”—

This said, he parted, and without delay  
By the pale moon-beam at the mountain’s foot  
Unsandall’d stood, and, ere he bent the knee,

Look'd up, and lo ! a thick and murky cloud  
Hung hovering o'er the top. Again broke forth  
The awful voice ; again the prophet veil'd  
His face and lowly knelt ; when thus the Lord—

“ Behold, encanopied in clouds I come,  
That, when I speak, the congregated tribes  
May hear my voice, and of thy truth assur'd,  
May know thee for my servant, and henceforth  
For evermore believe thee. Hie thee hence  
Unto the people ; sanctify their hearts,  
And let them wash their garments, and be clean  
Against the third day ; for in that same day  
In sight of all the host I will come down  
Upon Mount Sinai, round whose hallow'd base  
Thou shalt set bounds, and proclamation make  
To all the people, that they take good heed  
How they approach, or rashly tempt the mount ;  
For he, that tempteth it, shall surely die.—  
When thou shalt hear the cornet sounding long,  
Then may the tribes draw near unto the mount.”—

The mandate thus deliver'd, Moses sought  
The camp, and all, that was enjoin'd him, told,  
Warning the people to reserve themselves  
Pure and expectant to behold the Lord  
On the third day. To the minutest word  
'The strict command was fearfully obey'd;  
When at the dawn of that important day  
Anxious the people rose, and whilst all eyes  
Were fixt upon the east, where Sinai's mount  
Steep and yet dark in the horizon stood,  
In fiery streams from forth the thund'ring clouds  
The flashing light'nings burst, the mountain quak'd,  
And the whole vault of Heav'n was wrapt in flame.  
'Then was the terror, then all Israel hid  
Their faces, and the boldest of the host  
Shook in their mailed habergeons for fear,  
And trembling stood aloof. Still blaz'd the mount,  
And loud the elemental roar was heard  
In bursts, that seem'd to shake the pillar'd earth.  
Then Korah shrunk into his inmost tent,

And would have knelt to Moses, if no eye  
Might witness his submission : then a cry  
Ran through the multitude—" Have mercy, Lord !  
Not in thy terror, Lord, break forth upon us,  
But spare thy people !" —This when Moses heard,  
From forth the camp he came, and cross'd the bound,  
And to the interdicted mountain's foot,  
So privileg'd of God, unharm'd approach'd :  
Then ceas'd the lightnings, then the air was still,  
And the quell'd thunder died upon the ear.  
And now the cornet, sounding long and loud,  
Gave signal to the people to come forth :  
Withdrawn they stood beside the nether part  
Of the envelop'd mount, that to the clouds  
Smok'd like a furnace : all the while the sound  
Of the loud cornet echo'd through the air,  
Till Moses spake, and to the mount call'd up  
To meet the Lord, this gracious charge receiv'd—  
    " Go down unto the people, and give heed  
Lest they break in to gaze upon the Lord,

And many of them perish. Let the priests,  
Who sanctify themselves, come near, but none,  
Save thee and Aaron, may ascend the mount.”—

Thus to His servant Moses spake the Lord  
From out the cloud, whilst all the people stood  
Silent, aghast and trembling for the fate  
Of their great prophet, now no more in sight,  
Lost in the bright effulgence. He the whilst  
In his mysterious conference receiv’d  
Those statutes, by supernal wisdom fram’d,  
The dictates of Jehovah, which have stood  
Through the long lapse of ages, and shall stand  
Through ages yet to come. His gracious work  
Of heav’nly legislation thus perform’d,  
God from the mount ascended, and the fires,  
That kindled at his presence, were withdrawn ;  
The cloud dispers’d, and now upon the top  
Of Sinai’s mount oracular was seen  
The white-rob’d prophet—Joyful was the sight,  
And all the people cried—“The Lord be prais’d !

The hope of Israel lives ! Now, now we see,  
We know him for the chosen of the Lord"—  
He the meanwhile with solemn step came down,  
Bearing the sacred code, and from the rock  
Above the multitude outspread below  
His great commission thus aloud proclaim'd—

“ Hear, Israel, hear ! The Lord your God this day  
Hath made of you a nation, and I come  
To stablish His commandments. Thus He speaks ;  
These are the words of your enacting God,  
And these the sacred duties He ordains ;  
Mark them, digest them, write them on your hearts !

‘ I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out,  
And from the house of bondage set thee free :  
Other than Me no God shalt thou confess.’

‘ Thou shalt not grave an image to thyself,  
In form and fashion like to aught thou see'st  
In Heav'n above, or in the earth beneath,  
Or in the watery depths below the earth.  
To these thou shalt not bow thyself, nor make

The work of thine own hands to be a god :  
For I the Lord am jealous, and my wrath  
To third and fourth descendants will pursue  
Apostasy paternal ; but of those,  
Who love and serve me, thousands shall receive  
My mercy for the righteous father's sake.'

‘ Take not God's name in vain ; for if thou dost,  
Thy God will not acquit thee of the guilt.'

‘ Hallow the sabbath ! Six days shall be thine  
To do thy work ; the sabbath is the Lord's.  
Rest thou in that from labour : let thy son,  
Thy daughter, thy domestic and thy guest,  
Stranger although he be, rest on that day ;  
Nay, e'en thy cattle shall abstain from work :  
For in six days the world's great Founder built  
Heav'n's starry arch, the solid earth, and spread  
The circling seas, with all that they contain ;  
Then made the seventh day His day of rest,  
A holy sabbath, blessed of the Lord.'

‘ Father and mother, (for of them thou art)



See that thou hold'st in honour, so will God  
Give length of days to thee in Canaan's land.'

' From murder, from adultery, from theft  
Be diligent to keep thy conscience free.'

' Bear not false witness in thy neighbour's wrong.'

' Let not thine heart covet thy neighbour's house,  
His wife, his servant, whether man or maid,  
His ox, his ass, or aught thy neighbour hath.'—

Let these commandments be to thee a law  
Holy for ever, and transgress them not!"

Ah hapless Israel ! blessed had'st thou been,  
And above all the unenlighten'd world  
Glorious in knowledge, had'st thou wisely kept  
Pure and inviolate these sacred proofs  
Of one eternal, immaterial God,  
To thee alone reveal'd from Sinai's mount.  
Thou wert God's nation, and He was thy king :  
Why art thou now rejected and dispers'd  
Through every quarter of the peopled earth ?—  
Because thou gav'st thyself to human kings,

And they gave thee to less than human gods,  
To lifeless stocks and stones. Did'st thou not then,  
Or ere Mount Sinai's fulminating top  
Had ceas'd to glow with those seraphic fires,  
That veil'd the face of thy descending God,  
Did'st thou not even then revolt, and kneel  
To the brute image of a molten calf?  
What likeness saw'st thou of the living God,  
That thou should'st pay it worship, and provoke  
The meekest of mankind to dash to earth,  
And in an angry moment to destroy,  
The work of forty days, the sacred laws  
On stony tablets grav'd by God Himself?  
What ail'd thee, Aaron, to forget the Lord?  
What, Miriam, thee—a leper white as snow?  
Why burn'd the fires at Taberah? Why died,  
Unmourn'd of Israel, Aaron's priestly sons?  
Greatly, oh wretched people, have ye sinn'd,  
And sore aggriev'd the spirit of your God;  
But forasmuch as faithfully ye kept

The wond'rous annals, which that Book divine  
From the first birth of nature through the chain  
Of your eventful history unfolds,  
More grateful thanks from the whole Christian world,  
And milder treatment than ye have receiv'd,  
Justly ye merit ; for to you we owe  
Discoveries, which no human thought had reach'd,  
And only inspiration could supply.  
Therefore we know that for the remnant left  
God will provide, and, though for ages past  
Ye have been wand'rers, will in his good time  
Gather your scatter'd flock into His fold.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

## BOOK THE FOURTH.

### ARGUMENT.

*THE Israelites, warned by the rising of the cloud from over the tabernacle, march to Kadesh-barnea—The People become impatient to attempt the conquest of the promised land, and break into mutiny—Moses addresses them, and Korah undertakes to answer him—Finding himself deserted by the seditious, he departs in despair—The twelve spies are elected—Joshua confers with Caleb upon the choice of the ten, who are named by the Tribes—Korah betakes himself to the desert—Invokes the evil spirit, who appears to him—Kneels and makes his vow before the altar of Chemos—Is transported to his tent—His horrors upon waking are described—The book concludes.*



# THE EXODIAD.

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## BOOK THE FOURTH.

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NOW from the hallow'd and unseen recess  
Of Sinai's mount oracular when God  
Had dictated His statutes, and restor'd  
The fractur'd tablets perfect and entire  
To His commission'd prophet, time was come  
For Israel to receive the scriptur'd code,  
And bear it in the consecrated ark,  
Led by his cloud to Canaan's destin'd land.  
Yet some there were still obstinate of heart  
Against conviction evident to sense ;

These miserably perish'd : others err'd ;  
But they by timely penitence were sav'd,  
And Moses, ever prone to intercede,  
Further'd their suit for pardon. Strange it is,  
That any should have waver'd in their faith,  
When God by revelation so express,  
And signs and wonders in their sight display'd,  
Attested His omnipotence ; but they,  
Faithful historians of their own disgrace,  
Have pass'd the self-accusing records down  
Through ages incorrupt, and we who read  
Their sacred volume, wonder and believe.

Now when the servant of the Lord foresaw  
The day appointed to renew his march,  
Thus to the leader of the host he spake.

“ Joshua, my son, your constancy and truth  
Are known to God ; for you have faithful been,  
When some, the nearest to my heart, fell off,  
And Aaron vex'd the Lord, and Miriam sinn'd.  
Of Nadab and Abihu, who presum'd

To offer fires unhallow'd, you have seen  
The righteous doom, and when destructive plagues  
Ravag'd the outskirts of the tainted camp,  
You kept the strength of Judah undefil'd.  
Know then to Kadesh we direct our march ;  
Therefore be ready ere to-morrow's sun  
Break from the golden chambers of the east,  
To form your martial phalanx in array ;  
And when upon the confines of the land,  
Whither we journey, you shall plant your camp ;  
I can foresee that evil minds will there  
Find readier opportunities to plot  
And hatch new troubles ; for though Korah shrinks  
Whilst the Lord's thunder rolls from Sinai's mount,  
When the storm ceases, and the sky is clear,  
The sun-invited serpent will crawl forth,  
And 'twill behove us then to tread with care  
And guard our steps against the lurking foe.  
Of this no more ; for lo ! the night draws on,  
And thou hast need of rest. Paleness still sits



Upon thy cheek, my son ! Hence to thy tent :  
When actions speak, professions may be spar'd."—  
He said ; and as he press'd the hero's hand,  
Farewell, he cried ; favour'd of Heav'n thou art,  
And sure I am, the Lord, for Israel's sake,  
Will send His angel down to guard thy couch  
By night, and bear thee on his wings by day."—

Fair shew'd the morn : already Sinai's brow  
The sun's first horizontal rays illum'd,  
When, with a blast that made its high tops ring,  
The watchful Levites with their silver tubes  
Proclaim'd the rise of the mysterious cloud,  
Which veil'd the sacred tabernacle ; straight  
From every quarter of the crowded camp,  
This miracle stupendous to behold,  
Forth rusht the multitude. High pois'd in air  
The vap'rous column hung ; then through the ranks  
Of Judah's van loud was th' exulting cry,  
“ Lo where the signal of Jchovah flies !  
THE LORD OUR BANNER points to Canaan's land,

His cloudy herald marshals us to arms.

Tremble, ye nations ! In His strength we come."

When Aaron and his sons, to whom alone  
Intrusted was the mystic ark of God,  
Had veil'd their sacred charge, and brought it forth,  
At sight thereof the trumpet call'd to march,  
And onward mov'd the well-compacted host.  
Then Judah, cover'd by the associate tribes  
Of Zebulun and Issachar, unfurl'd  
His lion-standard, signal to the host.  
Them follow'd Gershon's and Merari's sons ;  
Their's was the tabernacle's sacred charge.  
Next came the warriors of the first born tribe,  
With Gad and Simcon ; after whom the sons  
Of Kohath bore the sanctuary of God :  
Last on the march, but not in trust the least  
Or valour's proof, the multitude of Dan  
With Ephraim and Manasseh clos'd the rear.  
Before them went the cloud ; they saw and hail'd  
This evidence of Heav'n's protecting care,

And follow'd where the guiding portent led.  
With eyes uplifted Moses watch'd the cloud,  
And through its changes trac'd the hand of God,  
And where His finger pointed shap'd his course :  
Northward it still advanc'd and led them on  
To further Kadesh over Pharan's wild ;  
Here vibrating in air awhile it hung,  
Then sunk, denoting that their march must cease.

Here while they tarried, oft with anxious eye  
On the long range of Edom's hills they gaz'd,  
Which to the north of their encampment rose  
In towering heaps, a barrier rude and wild  
To Canaan's land, their long-expected seat.  
Unseen was all beyond, but fancy still,  
(Then most creative where no models are,  
From which to picture her ideal scenes)  
Pour'd on their mental eye a wild display  
Of rich allurements ; wealth by others stor'd,  
And cities, where to dwell, by others built ;  
Fields, that no toil demanded, flocks and herds

Grazing the banks of rivers clear and full  
As the capacious Nile, inspiring hopes  
Of lasting plenty and long years of peace.  
Thus, whilst by Hope's anticipation mockt,  
Their fancy gloated on these shadowy scenes,  
Deckt out in all Imagination's pomp,  
Loudly they call'd on Moses and the chiefs  
To lead them on to glory and success.  
No heed gave they to any, that oppos'd  
Doubts of accomplishing their wish'd attempt :  
The Lord was with them : Canaan was their own ;  
Soon as their conqu'ring banners should be seen  
On the hill tops, the kingdoms of the plain  
Should vanish, and be scatter'd like the dust.  
Of Korah and his councils their contempt  
Broke forth in bitterest taunts. What murmurs now,  
What plea could he devise to damp their zeal ?  
Famine and thirst and sickness and the sword,  
Nature herself was conquer'd. They were now  
God's people, and His cloud-conducted host

Stood on the confines of the promis'd land ;  
And when Arabia's king with all his hordes,  
(Warriors, that kept the desert in dismay,)  
Could not withstand a fragment of their strength,  
What had the whole to fear from Edom's sons,  
A weak, emasculate, voluptuous race ?  
“ Let us ascend, they cried, the barrier heights ;  
There on his rocky throne while Moses sits,  
And lifts his hands in pray'r, we from the hills,  
Like eagles from their airy, shall come down,  
Led to the fight, and with the hostile blood  
Of these idolaters, proscrib'd by Heav'n,  
Deluge the plains below.”—Thus whilst they gave  
Their vaunting tongues the rein, and loudly talk'd,  
Korah and his associates, in whose hearts  
Rankled revenge and malice, now discern'd,  
How by adoption of their eager zeal,  
And urging them to mutinous contempt  
Of all, who counsell'd wisely, they might screw  
Their passions to Rebellion's fav'rite pitch,

And shake those powers they labour'd to subvert.

As when across some river's rapid course  
A massy fragment falling choaks its bed,  
The angry stream, disdainful of restraint,  
Breaks through its yielding banks, and o'er the plain  
Rushing resistless, a new channel forms  
To bear its ample volume to the deep ;  
So, to new projects turn'd, the rebel crew  
Of Korah now were loudest in the cry  
For instant action, spurning with disdain  
Their coward policy, who would oppose  
The glorious impulse, that insur'd success.  
Would Moses say the moment was not ripe  
For victory, when every heart beat high,  
And panted to engage ? Would he now halt  
And hover on the frontiers of the land,  
Till the alarm was spread, and time allow'd  
For every city to repair its walls,  
And arm for its defence ? Was there a man  
From Joshua downwards to the meanest hind,

That carried burdens in the army's rear,  
Who would not stamp that dalliance with contempt ?  
If Moses would not hear their just appeal,  
And Joshua scrupled to unsheath his sword,  
"Twere time for Israel to assert the rights  
Of choice and freedom, and when they, who rul'd  
The wills of others, rul'd not for their good,  
"Twas then that reason justified revolt.

As when, at morning, in some wood's recess  
A houseless traveller unnotic'd leaves  
The smother'd relics of the fire, at which  
O'er night his scanty pittance he had warm'd ;  
If then, forth bursting from their caves remote,  
Contending winds with raging fury blow,  
The half-extinguisht sparks revive, and far  
Dispers'd around, in every bush and brake  
New fuel finding, spread devouring flames ;  
Not with less fatal speed through Israel's tribes  
Ran the vile taunts of Korah, till the crowd  
Warp'd by his foul devices, madd'ning rusht

From every quarter, and approach'd the tent,  
Where Moses, circled by the princes, sate  
In consultation grave. Loud was the cry,  
And every voice was urgent to demand  
Immediate seizure of the promis'd spoil,  
So tempting to their hopes. Indignant rose  
The warrior chiefs, and half unshcath'd their swords,  
Till Moses stay'd their anger, and unaw'd  
With calm composure from the tent went forth—  
“What would ye, movers of revolt,” he cried?  
And, as he spake, so bright his visage shone,  
That from his presence instantly they shrunk,  
As from the radiance of the glorious sun  
Fly the dark shadows of retiring night.  
Still'd were their clamours; in attention deep  
They stood, whilst with an air of high command,  
Advancing to their front, the prophet spake—  
“Is this the duty that ye owe to God,  
And thus do ye fulfil His sacred laws?  
What means this tumult? Wherefore do ye thus



Disturb our serious councils, and provoke  
The anger of the Lord, which well ye know,  
If once let loose, is a consuming fire ?  
Some traitor to your peace hath taught you this ;  
This is the work of some insidious wretch,  
Who first enslaves your reason, and then seeks  
To shift destruction from himself to you.  
Where is amongst you that presumptuous man,  
Who dares to set against the will of Heav'n  
His arrogant decree ? Let him stand forth !  
He, who defies th' Omnipotent, may well  
Meet face to face the mortal, and avow  
The bold determin'd purpose of his soul.  
But this hath guilt peculiar to itself,  
This is mean malice, this is the device  
Of the assassin, who conceals the knife,  
And shrouds himself in darkness, on the watch  
When to forsake his hiding place, and deal  
Unguarded honesty the fatal blow.  
Nor am I, sons of Israel, yet to learn

Who are the movers of your mad revolt.  
Bring not your idle murmurs to my ears  
But send your masters hither. Hence, away !  
Remember the great mercies of your God,  
Revere His justice, tremble at His power,  
Break from the chains of error, and repair  
By penitent submission your offence."

Here Moses ceas'd, when Korah from the crowd  
Advancing, thus with studied turn of speech  
'The temporizing orator replied—  
" If zeal for Israel's glory be a crime,  
You have my free confession that my thoughts  
Run with the many, who believe that God  
Hath brought us hither to possess the land,  
To our fore-fathers promis'd : on this faith  
My reason and religion both are built :  
I am not of your councils ; if I err  
Correct me of my error—When I note  
The ardour of our warriors, and have seen  
What mighty things their courage can effect,

When led by Joshua, I'm dispos'd to hope  
That they, who over Amalek prevail'd,  
Back'd by the pray'rs of Moses, will not shrink  
In battle from the Edomites—But here,  
If I am too presumptuous, if I think  
Too well of our brave army, you perhaps,  
Who know it better, may esteem it less :  
I am myself no warrior, as ye see,  
Yet those, who are, have told me that delays  
Ofttimes create those dangers, which the hand  
Of vigilance fore-arm'd had turn'd aside.  
Therefore my judgment is with them, who hold  
That we should take the vantage of the time,  
And rather meet an unprepared foe,  
Than prodigally sacrifice our chance  
To their convenience, and exhaust our powers,  
While they replenish theirs. I firmly thought,  
When God had brought us forth from Goshen's land,  
He meant to make us free ; if so, methinks  
To over-rule our choice is in effect

To rob us of our freedom, and defeat  
God's gracious purpose. Oh ! if I must lose  
The liberty of mind, let me endure  
Egyptian bondage, make me Pharaoh's slave :  
For as the conscious spirit of a man  
Transcends in dignity this garb of flesh,  
So does the tyranny, that robs my soul  
Of that divine intelligence, which Heav'n  
Created free as air, afflict me more  
Than those oppressive burdens, that at most  
Give but corporeal pain."—Here as his voice  
Swell'd to a louder tone, he turn'd a look  
Upon the crowd, expecting to receive  
The flattering tribute of their loud acclaim ;  
Silent they stood, and with averted eyes  
Mark'd their contempt : he saw the scene how chang'd,  
How fleeting was the triumph of his hope,  
And in his declamation's mid career  
Abasht, perceiv'd his cause already lost.  
As the convicted felon, who in sleep

Dreams of escaping from the law's pursuit,  
Awakes with double horror, whilst the moon  
Shews through the prison-bars his dreary cell,  
And dreadful recollection sets in view  
The sword of justice waving o'er his head :  
Such were the pangs that factious Korah felt,  
When, deeming to have touch'd the master-string,  
That would have drawn all hearts into a league  
And full accordance with his trait'rous plot,  
He found himself abandon'd and renounc'd ;  
A solitude around him : then his mind,  
Of late so pregnant, instantly became  
Sterile and waste ; his tongue, by fear congeal'd,  
Had lost the power of speech ; but when the eye  
Of Moses glanc'd upon him, soul-subdu'd,  
Self-sentenc'd, and with blackest thoughts possest,  
Desp'rate he turn'd to flight, and sought to hide  
His horrors in the desert's deepest gloom.

“ Elders and chiefs of Israel, Moses cried,  
Lo, where Sedition's advocate is fled !

Do ye not blush, ye Levites, to behold  
The son of Izhar so disgrace his stock ?  
Well would it be for him, if this defeat  
Of his malicious hopes might be the sum  
Of his atonement—But 'twere time methinks  
That we resume our council, and dismiss  
These rash misguided people to their tents :  
That task, renown'd Elishama, be yours !  
Your voice they'll hear, your person they'll respect."—

He said ; the warrior instantly obey'd ;  
To every duty prompt, no need had he  
Of further bidding—Haggard were his looks,  
And ghastly pale with copious spilth of blood ;  
Him when the crowd beheld, and trembling heard  
His clanking armour, onward as he strode,  
And shook his threat'ning spear, backward they reel'd  
Confounded and abash'd—" Go, get ye hence ;  
Fly to your tents, he cried, and hide your heads,  
Ye loud but empty brawlers ! Must we learn  
Wisdom from you ? Or is it you, alone,

That feel for Israel's glory? Are we slack,  
And do we need your spur to prick us on?  
Is it to victory that you would be led?  
Beware you flag not ere you mount those hills,  
For there it harbours, there the noble game  
Will hold you to the chace. If blood ye want,  
If wounds ye wish for, lo! I have to spare!  
Till you shew furrows in your breasts like these,  
I shall suspect you freer of your tongues  
Than of your courage. You would beat to arms;  
That is your mighty mandate, is it not?  
Fine generals you would be, to sally forth  
On a blind enterprize before you knew  
One atom of the country you invade.  
Away! and till ye're able to instruct  
Your guardian prophet in the will of God,  
And tutor Joshua in the art of war,  
Let us not hear your clamour, and beware  
How ye provoke the thunder of the Lord,  
Or ye are lost for ever—Hence! begone”—

He said ; they turn'd, and silently dispers'd ;  
Such virtue is there in a brave man's voice,  
Such terror in his frown. Straight he return'd,  
And thus to Moses, now in council, spake—  
“ Right holy seer, the tumult is appeas'd,  
And what thou gav'st me in command is done.  
The people will no longer interrupt  
Your councils with their clamorous appeal.  
I only gave them what they fairly earn'd,  
Rough salutation in reproachful terms ;  
For eloquence ne'er touch'd my stubborn lips  
With the soft unguent of persuasive words :  
I simply sent them going, and they went.”—  
“ Thy merits, gallant chief, replied the seer,  
Owe not their lustre to a vain display  
Of glittering words, but to the better proof  
Of glorious actions and of zeal for God.  
And now, ye princes, leaders of our tribes  
And elders of our Israel, hear my words !  
Ye see before you those high-tow'ring hills,



Beyond whose barrier lies your promis'd land :  
Thither, did prudence warrant the attempt,  
Unbidden we should march ; we should not need  
These chidings to arouse us, glad to quit  
A station, that in nothing else excels,  
But in varieties of care and pain.  
What views have we, what purposes to serve  
Distinct from those of all this murmuring host ?  
Can we derive advantage from the toils,  
Which in this cheerless desert they sustain ?  
Are we not sharers in them ? which of us  
Feels not his equal portion of distress ?  
Doth drought less pang us, doth the fiery sun  
Dart with less scorching energy on us  
Than on the meanest follower of our camp ?  
Who then than us more eager to advance,  
Did not imperious duty stay our march ?  
For we have liv'd sequester'd through the lapse  
Of ages, pent in bondage, and cut off  
From all acquaintance with the nations round

By the restrictive policy of those,  
Who were our masters : nothing do we know,  
Beyond th' horizon, which our eyes embrace,  
Of those pre-destin'd regions ; all is strange :  
What camps, what barriers and what walled towns,  
The nations, that inhabit them, may have  
T' oppose our passage, we are still to learn :  
Yet a vague rumour tells of wond'rous things,  
Of armies countless, cities vast and strong,  
Of Anakim, whose more than human bulk  
And stature, strike beholders with dismay,  
Invincible in arms : this I have heard,  
But neither yield to terror, nor resign  
Full credit to th' account : behoves us still  
To pause upon the rumour, and devise  
How to distinguish what is true from false.  
Here then I stop ; for who will teach us that ?  
Who of this princely circle will attempt  
A task to awe the spirit of the bold,  
Appal the cautious and perplex the wise ?

As in my tent at midnight I repos'd,  
That sacred voice, which spake from Sinai's brow,  
With awful intonation smote mine ear—  
'Moses, arise! it cried; to search the land,  
Send forth a chosen band; from every tribe  
Select some princely warrior, who may view,  
And make report of your allotted seat.'—  
So spake the voice divine. Where is the man,  
The voluntary martyr of his tribe,  
Who will adventure on this bold emprise?  
I marvel not that ye are slow to court  
Dangers, that set no glory to your view,  
And sink the warrior from his lofty port  
To the opprobrious office of a spy,  
Ofttimes the prelude to a shameful death.  
Yet so the Lord decrees, and I will hope  
There are amongst us some, who, to His will  
Obedient, will esteem no office mean,  
No task a labour, and no death a shame."—

He ceas'd, when Joshua instantly arose,

And thus he spake—" Ye reverend elders all,  
And chiefly thou, great prophet of the Lord,  
From whom we learn His will, and hear His laws,  
Let me not suffer in your noble minds  
As one too arrogant, when I avow,  
Greater ambition cannot fire my breast,  
Than to be sharer in this glorious task ;  
And be the danger or the death my fate,  
I shall embrace it as the earthly crown  
Of all my labours, and lay down my life  
With joyfulness, if so I may but mark  
My love for Israel and my zeal for God.  
Who my compeers shall be I venture not  
To dictate to your wisdom : if from these  
Here present you select them, to your choice  
Nor I, nor any living, can object ;  
They must be worthy when approv'd by you :  
Yet I must own, (and let me not despair  
Of your indulgence) that I have a friend  
Dear to my heart, the man, whom I would chuse

From the whole world to share my nearest thoughts,  
Caleb, a son of Judah. If to me  
Ye grant this high commission, grant to him  
Like peril and like privilege to die,  
If Heav'n shall so decree, for Israel's sake."—

He said; the elders rose with one accord  
To honour their great chieftain, and affirm  
Their general approbation of his zeal;  
Nor did they less applaud his worthy choice  
Of the brave son of Judah, justly priz'd  
For his high fame in arms; and now all eyes  
Were turn'd on Caleb; he with modest grace  
And due obeisance rising from his seat,  
Took from his head the sable-plumed casque,  
And thus, uncover'd, spake—"I should be lost  
To every manly feeling, every sense  
Of gratitude or honour, did I fail,  
(Though little worthy to engross the time  
Of this assembly) to express my thanks  
To that too partial friend, who calls me forth

To share his labours in the patriot cause,  
To which I trust all present will believe  
I am most ready to devote my life.  
Yes, holy sage, I live but to obey  
Thy voice, which speaks the mandates of the Lord,  
Who is the God of Israel ; and if he,  
Whose brave achievements in Rephidim's field  
Will stand recorded in th' immortal page  
Of Israel's annals, deigns for me to breathe  
A wish, and grace me with the name of friend ;  
If in the dangers, that await his search  
Beyond those hostile mountains, Joshua thinks  
That I will not desert him, or abuse  
The honour of his choice, I do implore  
Your gracious approbation of that choice ;  
So will I prove, that, when he call'd me friend,  
He spoke me truly, and selected forth  
One, whose supreme ambition is to live  
A witness of his glory, or to fall  
Dead by his side—Be this memorial mine,

That I was Joshua's friend—I ask no more.”—

The hero ceas'd, and in th' approving smile  
Of the meek prophet felt a purer praise,  
Than the loud roar of thousands could bestow.  
Joy sate on every face : it was a scene,  
Where envy seem'd for once to have no part,  
And whisper'd praises round the circle ran.  
Whereat Elishama, of Ephraim chief,  
Uprose, and thus the veteran warrior spake—

“ With due submission to our council's guide,  
Whose word, by wisdom sanction'd and by Heav'n,  
Is, and for ever ought to be, our law,  
I should conceive, when these illustrious chiefs,  
By whom great Amalek and Omar fell,  
Enroll their honour'd names, the list is full ;  
For who is there amongst us, that will shrink  
From toils, which Joshua and which Caleb share ?  
When in the battle, fainting with my wounds,  
Nor sight, nor strength were left me, then it was  
Caleb receiv'd the javelin on his shield,

That had for ever clos'd these eyes in death :  
When in the tent with Joshua I was laid,  
And the last sigh was quivering on my lips,  
The generous hero saw my piteous state,  
And interceded with the holy seer,  
That I might also live—The healing breeze  
Pervaded my sick heart, and Heav'n's blest light  
Once more revisited my closing eyes :  
Thus in the power of Moses I survive  
To do him service and obey his word ;  
And as my heart is with these patriot chiefs,  
Who to this hardy enterprize are pledg'd,  
So, under favour, I would fain devote  
All that is left of this war-batter'd trunk  
To them and to their cause."—Here as he bent  
His eyes on Moses, he perceiv'd the seer  
With interdicting hand had giv'n the sign,  
That warn'd him to desist from further suit ;  
At sight whereof the warrior check'd his speech,  
And in respectful silence paus'd to hear



What the presiding wisdom might decree :  
Nor long he paus'd, when, rising from his seat,  
Thus with a smile benignant Moses spake—

“ Elishama, though I, and all, must praise  
Your generous zeal, yet for the common good  
Of Israel, and your own especial tribe,  
We must conjure you to remain with us,  
And spare the remnant of a life, which God  
In His prospective mercy, when all hope  
Was lost, for other duties hath reserv'd.  
The toilsome journey, which those friends must take,  
Who shall go forth to search the destin'd land,  
Is not for you, whose wounds, as yet unheal'd,  
Would but retard their progress through the maze  
Of distant regions, hostile and unknown.  
And now although I see before me chiefs  
Of every tribe, yet will I not offend  
So many worthy by selecting one :  
Him, whom his tribe shall chuse, I will approve.  
When princely Joshua quits the high command,

Which without honour's loss he had retain'd,  
And, with his gallant comrade, nobly braves  
This arduous enterprize, on which depends  
The fate of future armies, can I doubt  
If other tribes will scruple to present  
Their choicest warriors to assist the search,  
And share the toils, of heroes so renown'd ?  
No—With to-morrow's dawn I shall expect  
To see the whole appointed twelve complete :  
Then, what the Lord may dictate, all shall hear,  
And blessed they shall be, who, through the course  
Of their important duty, shall perform  
In faithfulness and truth what God ordains."—

He said, and, to his tent retiring, left  
The council to appoint their several chiefs.  
Forthwith from elder REUBEN they elect  
Shammua, the son of Zaccur ; from the tribe  
Of SIMEON, Shaphat ; whilst the general vote  
Of ISSACHAR gives Igal to the list :  
Palti, the son of Raphu, by the choice

Of BENJAMIN appointed of the twelve ;  
And Gaddiel, by the princes of the tribe  
Of ZEBULUN elect ; with Ammiel, son  
Of sage Gemalli, whom the chiefs of DAN  
Call to the bold adventure, pledge their names :  
MANASSEH's warlike captains give their voice  
For Gaddi ; ASHER's nobles to the list  
Present the name of Sethur, nor do these,  
So honour'd, shrink from the important charge :  
The princely chiefs of NAPHTALI bestow  
Their suffrages on Nahbi ; when at length  
Geuel, by GAD's concurrent choice enroll'd  
Participant, completes the chosen band.  
This done, the ten with Caleb, JUDAH's son,  
And Joshua, EPHRAIM's and the army's chief,  
Unite their hands and pledge their mutual troth-  
Alas ! had these been faithful to their trust,  
What mis'ries might not Israel have escap'd !  
Their duty thus perform'd, the council rose ;  
When Joshua, as with Caleb by his side

Tow'rds Judah's van he took his pensive way,  
Thus to his friend unbosom'd his sad thoughts—

“ Whether it be the error of my mind,  
Or that some heavy melancholy weigh  
On my late weaken'd frame, I cannot tell ;  
But so it is : in vain I strive to chase  
These ominous impressions, that persist  
To haunt me with suspicions and alarms,  
So foreign to my nature, so unfair  
To our elected brethren, and so false,  
As in all honour I must hope they are.  
But these forebodings master all the strength,  
That I can summon to my reason's aid.  
To thee my thoughts are open as to Heav'n ;  
On thee, my friend, my confidence is fix'd ;  
The stay of all my hope thou art ; but why,  
Why glance these evil auspices on them,  
And wherefore is it my repugnant heart  
Can harmonize with none but thee alone ?  
Why did not Moses name the chosen ten ?

Shall I confess to thee, there was not one  
From Shammua, the elect of Reuben, down  
To the last chosen by the sons of Gad,  
That did not chill me, as I took his hand  
In token of affiance? Some I know  
Slight and unsteady men; others I doubt.  
None of the chosen ten had found his name  
In that enrolment, had the choice been mine;  
Had it been Korah's, all."—He said, and paus'd,  
When Caleb thus—"I own my heedless thought  
Took slight account of any, whom the chiefs  
Of the electing tribes have singled out  
To spare themselves the task and fill the list.  
False brethren they may prove; but this I know,  
A faithful servant you shall find in me.  
Our wise and holy prophet is not apt  
To leave his work unfinisht, and I saw,  
When he withdrew from council, that on you  
He rested this adventure, well apprised  
That Heav'n would crown your labours with success

Therefore indifferent I reach'd forth to them  
My hand, but kept my heart entire for you."—

“Talk ever to me thus, the chief replied ;  
And when I yield to weakness, only set  
The mercies of my God before my eyes,  
And my sick mind shall be restor'd to health.  
Within this bosom there is lodg'd a heart,  
That knows no fear, when duty calls me forth  
Or for my friend, my country or my God :  
But it is made, as heart of man must be,  
Weak and susceptible of human ills ;  
And when I see rebellion rear its front,  
And envious Korah drive the madd'ning crowd  
To rise against all order, and insult  
God's chosen servant, then it is, I feel  
Infirm with passion ; then my bosom's lord  
Becomes my reason's tyrant. When the roar  
Burst on my ear, indignant to be brav'd  
By those, whom I commanded, I drew forth  
My sword, and, but that Moses staid my hand,

Had rush'd infuriate on the clam'rous throng :  
When Korah spake, again my anger rose,  
Again the patient prophet interpos'd,  
And I was silent, but my stifled rage,  
Though seeming dead, had fuel for more flames.  
And hence it is, that as the slightest wound  
Grows foul and ulcerous when the blood's diseas'd,  
So in the mind's infirmity we view  
Through a false medium of discolour'd light  
The actions and the characters of men ;  
And even thus perchance I may have wrong'd  
These worthy chiefs, elected of our band,  
Friends to our cause and partners in our toil."—

“ It may be so, the youthful warrior cried,  
Time, which tries all men's courage, will try their's,  
And when their ore hath sev'n times pass'd the fire,  
Proof and experience will decide its worth :  
But see ! the night hath stol'n upon our talk,  
And we are summon'd by to-morrow's dawn  
To our new enterprize—Fair hours befall

My best of friends, and calm repose the whilst."—

Dark o'er the desert fell the shades of night,  
And thick'ning vapours shrouded the pale stars,  
When Korah, wand'ring wild, like one distraught,  
Or him that walks in sleep, with felon step  
Had pass'd the sandy waste, and now, immers'd  
In deeper shade, he found his path beset  
With crags and tangling bushes intermixt ;  
For at the mountain's base he had arriv'd.  
Here, in a solitude, whose gloom inspir'd  
Horrors congenial with his desperate thoughts,  
He stopp'd, and stood ; then, as the swelling tide  
Of recollection rush'd upon his mind,  
Thus, mingling groans with words, and tears with rage,  
The dire effusions of his soul burst forth.

“ Why did the Maker call me into life ?  
Why waste His workmanship upon my clay,  
And store it with perceptions, senses, thoughts  
And understanding, for no other use  
But to sum up my mis'ry's vast amount ?



When he makes wretched, why not make me base,  
Dull and irrational? Ah, why erect  
This tyranny of conscience in my heart,  
Which to avoid, to these unhallow'd rocks,  
That never echo'd God's tremendous name,  
Madd'ning I fly, and call the dæmons up  
To wrap me in such horrors, as may blast  
The eye, that does but glance upon my shame?  
The Good Pow'r casts me from him; whither now,  
But to the evil shall a wretch resort?  
Whom shall I call? No more of Egypt's gods!  
With them there is no refuge, no support;  
They have been tried; their feeble aid has fail'd.  
Esau was high in honour and renown:  
When Jacob's race were slaves, he dealt out crowns  
And kingdoms to his sons: Esau had gods,  
Though not of Abram's choice; and though the sword  
Hath glanc'd on Amalek, still Chemos reigns  
O'er the unconquer'd nations of the south.  
If then thou art a god, and hast an ear,

Chemos, thou God of Esau, list to me !  
I ask not death, for that I can command,  
And death brings no revenge : I court thee not  
For aught this world can give, and only wish  
These Abramites to feel what Korah feels,  
Shame, disappointment, phrensy and despair.  
Let them like me go forth, like me invoke  
Thee from thy central cavern to arise,  
And meet them in this desolated waste ;  
Then, if thou hast the virtue of a fiend,  
Turn their vain pray'r to mock'ry, and insult  
Their vile apostacy, as dæmon should."—

'Thus as he rav'd blaspheming he perceiv'd  
A vaporous light of pale and livid hue,  
Descending from the mountain, till at length,  
Alighting on his path, it led him on  
To a rude altar, chissel'd from the rock,  
And, resting there, discover'd to his view  
'This writing, deep engrav'd upon the stone—  
“ To Chemos, lord and light of all the earth,

Esau, when journeying from Beer-sheba, built  
This altar. Hither let the wretched fly,  
Approach and be at peace ! So Chemos wills.”—

Pondering the wond’rous legend Korah stood,  
When from behind the altar there arose  
What seem’d a cloud, but more than cloud condense,  
Though insubstantial, formless, undefin’d ;  
’Trembling he gaz’d, and whilst he gaz’d, behold !  
The pillar’d mist dissolving took the shape  
And human features of an ancient man,  
White bearded to the girdle : tall it stood,  
And o’er its mantled shoulders seem’d to wear  
A lion’s shagged hide ; whilst as it rose,  
The flame, that heretofore had faintly play’d  
About the altar, brighten’d and became  
Intense and fiery red—Rooted with fear,  
Depriv’d of speech and motion, Korah stood,  
And thus at length the ghastly vision spake.”—

“ Son of Affliction, what thou readest there,  
If rightly thou interpretest the text,

And dost believe in that transcendant power,  
Who offers thee this comfort, be thy grief  
Deep as it may, however great thy sin,  
Trusting in Chemos, from the galling yoke  
Of a vext conscience thou shalt be releas'd,  
And what thy heart desires, thy hand shall reach.”—

To him the Levite thus essay'd to speak—  
“ If Chemos can do this”—“ If he can do !  
What can he not, the angry vision cried ?  
I am his minister ; I know his power,  
And in my thought can trace him through the span  
Of that vast circle, which he daily fills,  
When in his fiery car he belts the globe,  
And with the bright infusion of his beams  
Renders transparent every secret thought,  
That harbours in the gloomy hearts of men.  
Approach no nearer ; stretch not forth thy hand  
To touch me, lest it wither and fall off.  
Thou art of earthly matter ; I of air,  
Untainted by mortality ; for I

Of Chemos am the messenger for good  
To those he favours, and, from death exempt,  
Am, like the master spirit whom I serve,  
Of essence incorporeal. Thee I know,  
Korah, the son of Levi, and of kin  
To Moses, execrable name, accurst  
By every spirit of earth, air or fire ;  
Still, by the deadly hatred, which thou bear'st  
To that abhorr'd magician ; by thy zeal  
For Amalek, whom Moses with his spells  
And incantations treacherously robb'd  
Of victory and life ; by proofs like these  
Of a true temper, such as Chemos loves,  
Thou hast aton'd for nation and for name,  
And by his favour shalt enjoy revenge,  
Vast as thine appetite can entertain,  
Though thine unsated hunger should increase  
By what it feeds on—Therefore kneel and swear  
To Chemos.”—“ Kneel ! the shrinking traitor, cried ;  
To Chemos would'st thou have me kneel, and swear

To a strange God ? Mine I have seen in fire,  
Heard Him in thunder, felt the firm earth quake,  
Whilst He descended on the burning mount,  
That like a furnace smok'd."—Thus as he spake,  
The dæmon trembled, and his face became  
Ghastly with rage. Again the caitiff cried—  
“ Thy god I mock not, but I dread my own ;  
Mine is a jealous God : I know not thine.  
Will he make dry the sea to let me pass,  
Feed me with bread from Heav’n, and from the rock  
Draw welling waters to allay my thirst ?  
Shew me thy Chemos ; manifest his power ;  
Let Chemos give me my revenge, and break  
The wizzard rod of Moses ; that will pay  
The purchase of my faith—and I will kneel.”—

“ Dost thou capitulate ? Then art thou lost”—  
Thus said the fiend within himself, unheard  
Of Korah, whilst with venom, like the toad’s,  
His heaving breast expanded, and his eyes  
Glar’d horribly within their sunken cells :

Red rose the flame afresh, that at the name  
Of God had sunk, and pal'd its angry hue—

“Thou shalt be satisfied, the tempter cried :  
No conquest shall the sons of Jacob gain ;  
This altar stands the bound'ry of their march :  
The god of Amalek defies their power ;  
Edom and Anak mock their vain attempt :  
The vultures of the desert shall devour,  
The pestilence shall smite them ; from the throne  
Of my bright god consuming fires shall fall :  
The soul of their diviner shall be sick ;  
Years upon years shall roll, and in the dust  
His hoary head shall sink and he shall die ;  
But never shall his foot o'erstep the bounds  
Of Canaan's land, and they, whose faith is built  
On promises, shall find they built on air.  
Doubt not ; believe ! for what I speak is fate.”—

“Enough ! the traitor cried ; if Moses drink  
Of disappointment's bitter draught, and die,  
It is enough : my vengeance is complete ;

But, say, shall Joshua live?"—"Enquire no more,  
The dæmon said: twelve spies are going forth;  
Of these is Joshua one; but ten are mine:  
Ignoble office this for Israel's chief;  
But thus your master dignifies his friends.  
To-morrow they depart; mark the event:  
Doubt not but I'll be near, where'er they go;  
They may be Canaan's spies, but I'll be their's.  
They shall return, but it will be a day  
Of bitterness to him, that is thy foe;  
Heavy shall be the yoke, that Moses bears,  
And sorely shall it wring him, when they speak  
The words, that I will put into their hearts:  
Rebellion then shall spread through all the camp,  
And thou shalt triumph. Only wait the time,  
Conciliate Chemos, and revenge is thine."

The dæmon ceas'd, when thus th' apostate wretch,  
Son of perdition, spake—"Whate'er thou art,  
Spirit of air or earth, so great the joy,  
Thy tidings minister to my sad heart,



That I will call thee gracious, and believe,  
That what thou hast auspiciously announc'd  
Shall be accomplish'd truly: in which faith  
Before this altar, low as to its foot,  
I bow my suppliant body, and devote  
My heart and its best functions to the power,  
Whose minister thou art, and from henceforth  
Whose servant in all duty I will be."—

" 'Tis well! the dæmon cried; thou art mine own  
And, as the night now deepens on the waste,  
And thou hast far to travel, to thy tent  
Swiftly I'll waft thee on the moment's wing,  
As in a dream."—This said, by magic spell  
He caught the soul-surrender'd caitiff up,  
And laid him on his couch, unseen of all.

Here in perturbed sleep th' apostate lay,  
Haunted by frightful dreams, till with the dawn  
Waking he started, and aloud exclaim'd—  
" God of my fathers, save me!"—for just then  
His agonizing conscience had pourtray'd

The furious dæmon in the act to seize  
And drag him to a hideous pit, that yawn'd  
Unfathomable, wrapt in sulph'rous flames.  
Cold sweat bedew'd his limbs, distortion wrung  
His palsied visage, and with fit so strong  
The dread phantasma had convuls'd his frame,  
The couch beneath him shook. Around he cast  
A look of wild distraction : one dim lamp  
Beside him hung, and shed a dying light,  
Than darkness-self more gloomy—" Oh my God !—  
Confus'd and muttering to himself, he cried,  
How came I hither ? and where have I been ?  
Is my mind perfect ? Do I see my tent ?  
Hark ! 'tis my wife that speaks ; I hear her voice.  
It is a dream ; it is my feverish brain,  
That wander'd to the wilderness ; not I,  
Not I have knelt to Chemos ; I have seen  
No altar, bargain'd with no ghostly shape,  
That prophecied of vengeance ; I have made  
No vows to idols, never spake those words."—

“ Say’st thou, a voice replied ? Hear them from me !  
For they are register’d by that dread power,  
To whom thy soul is pledg’d.”—Down on his couch,  
Down sunk the conscience-stricken wretch, abash’d,  
Confounded, whilst the voice aloud rehears’d  
This dreadful repetition in his ears—  
“ Before this altar low as to its foot  
“ I bow my suppliant body, and devote  
“ My heart and its best functions to the power,  
“ Whose minister thou art, and from henceforth  
“ Whose servant in all duty I will be.”

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

## BOOK THE FIFTH.

### ARGUMENT.

*THE expedition of the twelve spies, and their return to Kadesh-Barnea.*



# THE EXODIAD.

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## BOOK THE FIFTH.

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TO Moses, with the first approach of morn,  
The chosen twelve repair'd : they had dismiss'd  
Their martial bearing, and assum'd the garb  
Of those erratic traders, who transport  
Their gums and spices from the farther east,  
Across the desert, to the western marts.  
Before his tent the wakeful prophet sate,  
Awaiting the cool zephyr, that foreruns  
Day's orient lord : on their approach he rose,  
And courteous salutation gave to each ;

When Joshua thus—"Legate of God, behold,  
We, the elect of Israel's tribes, are come  
To hear your pleasure, and to ask your pray'rs."—

To him the venerable seer replied—  
"Short time will serve to trace your duty out,  
But to perform it will demand much care,  
And many a weary day ye must consume,  
Ere ye return from travel. Well ye know  
The land, which God hath promis'd you, is rich  
In Nature's bounteous gifts : this to explore,  
Its clime, its soil and produce, is your task :  
Ye'll bring us of its fruits ; but, above all,  
Ye will instruct us of the various tribes  
And nations, which inhabit it ; their strength,  
Their manners, characters, their modes of war,  
Their cities and defences : search like this  
Requires no common pow'rs ; but when your tribes  
Selected you, they chose no common men ;  
They trusted in your loyalty and worth,  
And out of rival thousands singled you.

But first to God, without whose saving aid  
Vain is all human hope, lift up your hearts ;  
That so His Providence may go before,  
And lead you through the peril of your way :  
And hark ! the Levites call to morning pray'r :  
Observe and follow me !" —He said, and pass'd  
The sacred fence, attended by the twelve ;  
There kneeling, instantly the priestly choir  
Thus with well-cadenc'd voices chaunted forth  
Their solemn oraison, distinct and slow—

“ Lord of the highest Heav'n ! at whose command  
The day-dispensing sun goes forth, array'd  
In borrow'd beams, reflected from thy throne,  
Source of perennial light, accept the pray'rs  
Of thy dependent creatures, who implore  
Thy fatherly protection, through the course  
Of this revolving day, to guard our hearts  
From the temptations and ensnaring wiles,  
That meet us in the dang'rous haunts of men.  
Oh, in thy mercy keep our souls from sin,



Teach us to hold our passions in controul,  
And mortify our senses that rebel.  
Lord, we have seen thy pow'r, and trembling heard  
Thy great commandment from the burning mount,  
That we should have none other God but Thee :  
Graft in our hearts this everlasting law,  
That we may strictly keep thy worship pure,  
And, by obeying Thee, command ourselves."—

They ceas'd, and Moses thus address'd his pray'r—  
“ Lord, we beseech thee, with thy grace behold  
Joshua thy servant, and the faithful youth,  
Son of Jephunneh, (lives to Israel dear),  
At thy commandment now advent'ring forth  
To distant regions,—perilous emprise,  
And, but for thy sustaining aid, a task  
To mock the wisdom and the strength of man.  
Grant to the chiefs, participant with them,  
Like blessing ; and, if constant they abide  
To do thy will, give them, O gracious Lord,  
Rest and a peaceful lot, their labour's meed,

In thine inheritance : but if they swerve,  
Let thy dread will be done ! for well we know,  
The faithful only shall possess the land.”—

Thus having pray'd, the holy prophet rose,  
And from the congregation with the twelve,  
Accoutred for their enterprize, came forth.  
Thence at the eastern quarter of the camp,  
With Joshua and with Caleb by the way  
Conversing, he arriv'd. The sun had reach'd  
His fiery station on the mountain tops—  
“ Here we must part, he cried. Ye see your course ;  
Ye know your duty. If the ten, who creep  
With lagging pace behind, conspire to thwart  
Your better counsels (which Heav'n's grace avert !)  
So much the rather ye stand fast, my sons,  
And, like your friendship, let your faith be firm.  
The Lord is with you.”—More he would have said .  
He wept—and silent sorrow spake the rest.

Pensive and motionless awhile they stood,  
Nor interchang'd a word : for it is then

That Nature winds her closest tend'rest folds  
About our hearts, when the sad moment comes  
For Honour to enforce its sacred claim,  
And tear us from the arms of those we love.  
And now the ten had join'd ; when Joshua thus—  
“ Friends, these are painful moments, and delay  
Will make that tug the harder, which at last  
Must sever us from our kindred for a time.  
Set forward, therefore ! and, when we have thrown  
That pathless barrier betwixt them and us,  
No friendships, no affinities will tempt  
Our thoughts to wander from the solemn league  
And fellowship, to which we must admit  
None others, nor one ray of hope derive  
But from our cause, our courage and our God.”—

This said, with many a sad departing sigh,  
Whither he led they follow'd, and pursued  
Their course, slow-winding round the rugged base  
Of Edom's mountains. There, in times long past,  
The wild Chorræans dwelt ; a savage race,

Of size unnatural and of forms uncouth :  
These Esau vanquish'd, and on their rude hills  
His own denomination, Seir, bestow'd.  
Strictly they search'd each inlet, if perchance  
The wild-ass or the antelope had left  
Some clue, whereby to thread the craggy maze.

At length, beneath Jectheel's lofty brow,  
What seem'd a passage tempted them to scale  
Its perilous ascent amidst the cliffs,  
That over-head majestically tow'r'd.  
Hence, when the mountain's summit they had gain'd,  
All Canaan's glories burst upon their view.  
A scene it was with Nature's stores enrich'd,  
And through its varying tracts of hill and vale  
The forming hand of culture might be trac'd :  
For there, meand'ring through the pastur'd fields,  
Long ducts of limpid waters, branching out  
From the maternal stream, might be descried ;  
There golden harvests glisten'd in the beams  
Of the resplendent sun ; nor was there dearth

Of forts and fenced cities, which bespake  
A people provident to reap the fruits  
Of peace, and guard against the events of war.

“ Hail, happy land, said Caleb, how unlike  
Are thy delicious groves and verdant fields,  
Thy peopled towns and fertilizing streams,  
To that dry wilderness, those savage rocks,  
On which our dim and bleared eyes have dwelt,  
’Till our souls sicken’d with the cheerless scene.”—

Here, whilst with glittering spires and stately fanes  
The checquer’d landscape, to the north and west,  
Spread all its rich variety in view,  
Far in the east the dread Asphaltic sea,  
(Of Sodomæ and Gomorrha once the seat)  
Dark in th’ horizon roll’d its vengeful waves.  
Once it was deck’d in Nature’s gaudiest trim,  
Gay flowery lawns, and blossom-bearing shrubs,  
Distilling odorous gums and dulcet balms ;  
Till all these fair and precious gifts of Heav’n,  
As if infected by the taint of those,

Who dwelt therein, turn'd vicious and became  
Rank and deprav'd : for now the wrath of God,  
By long impenitence provok'd, had smote  
Their cities' deep foundations, and o'erturn'd  
Them and their habitants in sulph'rous floods,  
Foul as the sin of those whom they engulph'd.

Now from Acrabbim's heights (so nam'd of them  
From the innumerable scorpions, that beset  
Their path in its ascent) the twelve came down,  
And eastward o'er the champagne shap'd their course  
To the Asphaltic lake. There, on the brink  
Of the sea-flood, the ancient lords o' th' soil  
A range of pyramids had rudely built,  
In which (ere Sodom and Gomorrha sunk)     `  
They plied their wells bituminous, and stor'd  
The precious mass, for various uses fit :  
Now the whole sea was sulphur, to the taste  
Bitter as gall, salt as the ocean's wave,  
And fetid to the smell as the foul feast,  
On which the vulture battens. Here awhile,

Encircled by the band, as Joshua stood,  
Pondering the awful scene, his thought recurr'd  
To records of time past, when thus at once  
With glowing indignation he exclaim'd—

“ Ah loathsome cities ! Ah polluted men !  
Whom Abram's intercession could not save,  
For lack of ten, ten righteous, to atone  
For thousands upon thousands, and divert  
The unwilling wrath of a long-suff'ring God.  
And was it here that you have made your grave ?  
Was this the consummation, this the end  
Of all your revels, all your golden dreams  
Of sports and feasting, where the mantling wine  
Danc'd in the brimming goblet to your lips ?  
This sulph'rous suffocating pool,—was this  
Your last, your parting draught, or ere ye plung'd  
To bottomless perdition ? Senseless brutes,  
Whom neither pray'rs could move, nor blindness warn,  
Nor ev'n an angel's purity restrain,  
Whilst ye besieg'd the door of righteous Lot,

Till Heav'n rain'd down its fires upon your heads,  
And earth, by your abominations sapp'd  
To th' very centre, sicken'd and cast up  
This black Tartarean vomit, to remain  
Your winding-sheet till time shall be no more.  
Ev'n so, my brethren, shall the wicked fare,  
When they revolt from nature and from God."—

He said, and on they pass'd, though not unseem  
Of some, who o'er the plain their progress held.  
Their raiments fashion'd in the eastern mode,  
The merchandize, which sundry of them bore,  
And the mixt dialect, in which they spake  
Like those, who trade to the Assyrian marts,  
Obtain'd them fair reply to all they ask'd,  
Or wish'd to learn, as strangers to the land  
That lay before them. As they journey'd on  
Under the cloudless sun, the noon-day beams  
Fell fiery on them, whilst no spring was found  
To quell their raging thirst. At length behold!  
Upon the margin of th' Asphaltic lake



A spacious grove attracted them with hopes  
That there the search might cease ; yet there, alas !  
No wells, but in their stead from every tree  
Amid the verdant branches fruits appear'd,  
Glist'ning like gold, and streak'd with vivid shades  
Of blushing crimson—Ah ! how fair without,  
Within how foul was that dissembling fruit,  
Black as the sea, on whose dire shores it grew—  
Apple of Sodom,—which like her had lost  
Its native loveliness, and turn'd to dust  
And ashes, victim of the general curse.

With disappointment cross'd the twelve retir'd,  
And tow'rs Engaddi bent their weary steps :  
There unsuspected took their needful rest,  
Their stores replenish'd, and renew'd their strength.

With the next dawn they pass'd the guilty cave,  
Whence the incestuous progeny of Lot,  
Moab and Ammon, their foul birth deriv'd.  
Departing thence, and on the further bank  
Of Cedron's stream arriving, Joshua cried—

“ Pause here, my friends, and reverently view  
This monument, no work of mortal man,  
This woman by the word of God at once  
Turn'd to a statue, which, though lifeless, speaks,  
And to the unborn ages still shall speak  
The doom of disobedience. Ye have heard  
The record of Lot's wife—behold her here !  
Behold the wretched victim, who, when warn'd  
Not to look back on what she left behind,  
Too rashly curious turn'd to view the show'r  
Of flaming sulphur, that on Sodom stream'd :  
Then instantly arrested were her steps ;  
See ! in the very act of flight, her head  
Reverted, wild her air, her hands outstretch'd,  
She stands a pillar of transparent salt,  
O'er-looking the tremendous lake, and still  
Displaying to posterity a proof  
Of human weakness and almighty power.  
Lord, in thy mercy keep us from the sin  
Of that audacious frowardness, that prompts

Our frail and feeble intellect to pry  
Into thy councils, and presumes to scan  
The secret operations of thy will.”—

Thus to his brethren spake the pious chief,  
And with this moral warning clos'd his speech :  
They heard, and after pause resum'd their march ;  
When, having pass'd the melancholy tract,  
Where Nature suffer'd for the sins of man,  
A brighter prospect open'd to their view ;  
And lo ! meand'ring through the verdant meeds,  
A copious river roll'd its silv'ry tide.  
Thither to scene so tempting, and so new  
To tenants of the wilderness, they came,  
And on its grassy bank, in the cool shade  
Of the tall poplars, which like stately guards  
Lin'd its majestic course, awhile repos'd.  
Meantime it chanc'd a shepherd, near at hand  
Tending his flock, espied them and approach'd.  
The man, though rustic, not discourteous seem'd ;  
His keen eye spake intelligence, and age

Had character'd upon his wrinkled brow  
The time-worn traces of a thoughtful mind :  
He ask'd them of their country, and enquir'd  
If haply tow'rds Assyria they were bound,  
And with what merchandize their bales were fill'd.

To him the son of Zacchur answer made,  
Brief in its terms and fav'ring their disguise—  
He had conjectur'd rightly of their course  
And of their calling ; strangers to the land  
Through which they travell'd, they were yet to learn  
Upon what river's hospitable bank  
'They now were seated, and appeas'd their thirst  
From its clear waters : much they had admir'd  
The various beauties of the vale they pass'd,  
And with united gratulations hail'd  
The happy natives of a land so fair.

“ To me the land is fair, the shepherd said,  
For I have seen none other ; from my youth  
Within this valley I have kept my flock.  
The river ye behold is Jordan call'd :

Far to the north, beneath the lofty range  
Of Libanus, 'tis said, two fountains rise ;  
From these the streams descending—Jor and Dan,  
(So by the natives styl'd) at Lesem soon  
Unite their wedded currents, and assume  
The name conjunct of Jordan : wandering thence,  
It visits Helon, and through fertile vales  
To Meron's lake meand'ring, there awhile  
Mingling is lost, till, from th' oblivious deep  
Emergent, Asoreth's high walls it laves,  
And, by its tributary streams increas'd,  
'Twixt Capernäüm and Korazin flows  
Into the spacious Galilæan lake."—

“ Enough, cried Joshua, we require no more,  
And for your courtesy we give you thanks.”—

“ Perhaps it were enough, the swain rejoind,  
Yct, if your leisure can afford the time,  
I fain would ask, if in the neighb'ring realms,  
Through which as merchants ye have progress made,  
Ye might advise me of some peaceful spot,

Whither an humble man, who hath reserv'd  
Some little store, the earnings of his toil,  
Might silently retire, and dwell secure."—

“Wherefore demand you this?” said Israel's chief.—  
“Alas ! replied the swain, on every side  
The din of war is heard : the mighty kings  
Of Canaan and Philistia call to arms,  
And draw together their confederate strength,  
To meet a formidable foe, who comes  
Flush'd with success, and headed by a seer  
Of magic potency, to dye our fields  
Red with the blood of thousands. Dreadful shock !  
Woe to the shepherd in that fatal day !  
I and my peaceful charge must be the spoil  
Of foe or friend alike. What they may be,  
At whom these mighty preparations point,  
Time only can divulge : I know them not.  
But these I know. From rude Daroma drawn,  
The hardy Canaanites, to war inur'd,  
And void of pity as their native rocks,

Flock to the standard of their ruthless king :  
The fierce Philistines, a gigantic race,  
Terrific, barbarous, by their titles known  
Of Anakim and Rephaim, seize their arms.  
Who can oppose them ?"—More he would have said,  
When Joshua, who perceiv'd that now his tale  
Had sunk too deeply in the hearts of some,  
Whose checks were colourless, here interpos'd,  
And calmly said—"Content yourself, my friend !  
All that, as passengers, we wish'd to know,  
The name of this fair river, you have told ;  
There needs not more, nor does it chance to us,  
Who travel on incurious, to direct  
Your search to spot more peaceful and secure,  
(For such to us it seems) than where you dwell.  
Once more accept our thanks."—This said, he ceas'd.  
The shepherd turn'd aside, and sought his flock :  
The twelve forsook the shade, and shap'd their course,  
Where in the centre of the level plain  
The lofty walls of Jericho were seen.

Here as they walk'd and commun'd by the way—  
“ Why didst thou check the peasant, Shammua cried,  
When with such clear intelligence he trac'd  
The course of Jordan, and was in the vein  
To give our curiosity its range  
In topics of more use, whercof we know  
So little, and have so much need to learn ?”—

Joshua, who, till this question met his ear,  
Silent and wrapt in thought had held his course,  
Unnoticing their talk, now turn'd a look,  
Mild, but with conscious dignity impress'd,  
Upon the Reubenite, and thus replied.  
“ Because that peasant sought us, and indulg'd  
In so dilated and profuse a style  
Of speaking to a plain and simple point,  
Therefore I check'd his speech : because his phrase  
Was not the phrase of shepherds, and perhaps  
Conscious withal that we ourselves were not  
What we assum'd to be, so, by ourselves  
Judging of him, I held him in suspect,



And shorten'd his harangue : thus if I err'd,  
I err'd from over-caution ; and on that,  
Expos'd as our condition is, methinks  
I may expect your wisdom to pronounce  
In commendation rather than reproof."

" I'm answer'd," Shammua cried, and bow'd his head  
With that mock-deference, which some assume,  
Who feign to make their confutation pass  
For acquiescence, granted, not compell'd.

Soon to the city-barrier they approach'd,  
And there, though kindly greeted, they were fain  
To let the visitors inspect their bales ;  
Which, though of burden light, were yet compos'd  
Of various articles, in value rich  
And rare in quality—Egyptian gems,  
Perfumes and spices ; part of which they chang'd  
For the fam'd balsam, which is there produc'd  
By a small shrub with leaf of ruddy tinge,  
From which, if pluckt at sunrise, there distills  
A pure and fragrant drop, so highly priz'd

Through all the east for its remediate powers,  
As balances its weight with finest gold.

Short sojourn here they made, and, to Beth-el  
Ascending, visited the sacred stone,  
Whereon their father Jacob in his dream  
Pillow'd his head, and saw th' angelic host  
Passing 'twixt heav'n and earth, and heard the voice  
Of the Almighty from the topmost range  
Of that cherubic company pronounce,  
That his should be the land, whereon he lay,  
And (oh transcendent goodness !) that in him  
And in his seed all nations should be blest.

Three days of toilsome travel they had pass'd,  
When from the summit of Gilboa's hills  
Hermon display'd her paradise of sweets,  
Surpassing all the fabling poet paints,  
When fancy pours upon his flow'ry page  
All that his thriftless foppery can amass  
From ransackt Nature, till by the excess  
Of his description nothing is describ'd.

Not such the rhapsodies that Hermon rais'd  
In Caleb's temp'rate mind : he felt the charms  
Of chaste Simplicity, and wrong'd them not  
With a vain gaude of words ; but as he stood  
Apart with Joshua on the mountain's brow,  
Pondering the scene, o'er which the setting sun  
With its last beams had spread a golden gleam—  
“ Friend of my heart, he cried, whilst now my thought  
Flits o'er yon peopled tract, where thousands dwell  
In peace and innocence, methinks I feel  
A wish that Heav'n had left my nature free  
From those entangling links, which chain me down,  
And rob benevolence of that expanse,  
Through which my soul unfetter'd longs to range,  
And as one family view all mankind.  
As we pass'd o'er the plain didst thou not note,  
(Yes, friend, I know thou didst) the village group,  
Where the old grandsire sate beneath his vine,  
And gave us friendly welcome ? Was thine heart  
An Israelite exclusive ; did it feel

No touch of tender pity for the doom  
Of hapless Hermon, when with grace unask'd  
The damsel brought us milk, and from the well  
A peasant youth drew water for our feet?  
Ah Joshua! Ah my hero! if I live  
To fight beside thee in that awful day,  
When the sword rages and the flames devour  
These idol groves and altars, I will say,  
Remember Hermon! spare the humble cot!"—

On him, now pausing, Israel's chieftain turn'd  
A mild assenting look, and straight replied—  
"Doubt me not, Caleb! If that day shall come,  
I will remember Hermon; for thy sake,  
Were other motive wanting, I will spare  
The aged grandsire and his humble cot.  
Whilst the fight burns, it is the hero's part  
To strike at Vict'ry, till she stoop her flight,  
Lur'd by his noble darings, and entwine  
Her laurel on his helm; but, that obtain'd,  
Revengeful should he loose the dogs of war

To ravage as they list, and scour the fields  
And peaceful hamlets on the quest for blood,  
This were to be a demon, not a man.  
For them, who, trusting in their idol Gods,  
Wage impious war against the Lord of Heav'n,  
Unsparing vengeance justly is reserv'd :  
But to the hospitable roof, where those  
Abide, who only through their ign'rance err,  
Knowing the mercies of the God I serve,  
Never, whilst I command, shall harm approach."—

“ Enough, the youth exclaim'd, more than enough,  
Thou first of heroes and thou best of friends !  
Rest, rest, ye harmless people, and farewell !  
The word of mercy, which your conqu'ror speaks,  
Here from this height, the beacon of your hope  
And your salvation, is gone up to Heav'n,  
Where kindred angels register the pledge."—

He said, and now, descending from the hills,  
Northward across the plain they took their way,  
And pass'd the limpid stream that skirts the mount,

On which Bethulia's fortress proudly tow'r'd.  
Thence, hast'ning on, at Azor they arriv'd,  
Where Jabin, Canaan's pow'rful monarch, held  
His court imperial. Here a warlike scene  
Of mighty preparation struck their sight :  
To the horizon's verge the prospect gleam'd  
With myriads bright in arms, standards and plumes  
High-streaming, and the dazzling blaze of spears,  
Tipt with the solar fire ; for, at the call  
Of their liege-lord supreme, the banners wav'd  
Of four and twenty feudatory kings.

From flank to flank, the journey of a day,  
The twelve, unnotic'd in their mean attire,  
Of vagrant traffickers, had spied the host  
Arrang'd for march by their respective chiefs.  
Then bray'd the trump : earth trembled as they trode  
And beat the firm rock with responsive step :  
Nine hundred chariots roll'd with steely scythes,  
Murd'rous device to mow the battle down,  
And strew the bloody field, o'er which they swept,

In swaths of mangled wretches, pil'd in heaps  
On each side their exterminating wheels ;  
Ambition's victims, hecatombs reserv'd  
To incense their grim idol with the smoke  
Of human sacrifice—oblation fit  
To welcome demons to their native hell,  
When they return besmear'd with mortal gore,  
And at the footstool of the ghastly king  
Boast their infernal deeds. Loud was the din  
Of martial instruments and neighing steeds  
And clanking armour, as the march commenc'd.

Apart, o'ershadow'd by a poplar grove,  
The twelve observant stood. When Shammua thus—  
“ When we return to Kadesh, and report  
The wonders we have seen, can we expect  
That any will permit the flattering hopes  
Of conquest to mislead them ? ’Twere in us  
An act of treason to disguise the truth ;  
And to declare it will be to confess  
That we have seen a host, with which compar'd,

The strength of Israel must submit and bend,  
As the weak ozier in a giant's grasp."—

“ For me, said Shaphat (eager to abet  
The base despondency of Korah's friend)  
For me, my brethren, I have seen enough ;  
And, as my conscience dictates, I shall speak  
To them, who sent me forth.”—Here Caleb cried,  
“ Speak what you list, and when and where you list,  
But speak the whole ; as yet you see but part  
Of what you have to tell, and if these swarms  
Of locusts trouble your disorder'd sight,  
With what eyes will you view the monster-king  
Of Basan and Philistia's giant host ?  
If you are busied to collect a tale  
Of terrors for your Simeonitish dames,  
You have not half your catalogue complete,  
Till you can fill it up with Anak's sons,  
And scare them with the iron bed of Og.”—

This said, he ceas'd ; when Gaddiel, the elect  
Of Benjamin, advanc'd from forth the ten,



Who, banded now together, stood apart.

A man he was, whose fretful spirit edg'd

His tongue with keenest obloquy, and turn'd

Good talents to ill use, and thus he spake—

“ If taunts were arguments, or to despise  
Advice, were proof of wisdom or of wit,  
Caleb, that praise unenvied should be yours :  
But when the evidence of sense is clear,  
That to this mighty host of Canaan's king,  
Though Basan and Philistia should stand by  
And tamely view the strife, we can oppose  
No pow'r proportionate, on which to risque  
The fate of battle, we must think your sword,  
Though flusht with conquest, cannot poise the scale :  
Nor can we yield our sober judgment up,  
Because your warm imagination teems  
With dreams of glory. No ! 'Tis rarely found,  
That early laurels fail to turn the brain  
Of the young fav'rite, on whose giddy brow  
False fortune plants them, marking her contempt

Of human vanity. Beware of that ;  
And recollect, that of twelve tribes we hold  
The trust of ten, and think and feel alike.”—

The angry spot now flush’d on Caleb’s cheek,  
And thus, with eye severe on Gaddiel bent,  
And brow dark-frowning, the rous’d warrior spake—  
“ If twice ten thousand thought and felt alike,  
And in their hearts could entertain a doubt  
That we are doom’d to conquer and possess  
This land, God’s promise, in despite of all  
That Jabin and his chariots can oppose  
To bar His providence, I should esteem  
Their coward combination as profane,  
Nor let their fellowship infect my faith.”—

Now silence reign’d, and ev’ry eye was turn’d  
On Joshua, who, with that composure mild,  
Which none but minds superior can preserve,  
Thus, without change of feature, calm replied—  
“ When we have made the circuit of the land,  
Which we were told to search, ’twill be our part,

Each for himself, to make sincere report  
In very faithfulness, as well befits  
The servants of our God, who sent us forth.  
We are too few for faction, and no more  
In number than will serve for self-defence.  
I have, like you, with careful eye survey'd  
The mighty host of Canaan's pow'rful king.  
A mighty host it is, and this I'll say,  
For this is truth ; but, as I cannot name  
That pow'r on earth, which Israel ought to fear,  
I'll add no word, that can imply despair.  
Jabin hath chariots ; so had Egypt's king :  
Where are they now ? It fits not me to vaunt  
Of Amalek, for so I might deserve  
The charge of vanity. Yet let me say,  
A braver warrior never wielded sword :  
I was a child before him, but the Lord  
Upheld me, and from out the mist of death  
Brought me to life and light. Let no man think  
I wish to lead his conscience in the noose

Of my opinions ; whilst in common cause  
We act together, let us act as friends.  
Meantime, if Caleb, from whose faithful heart  
The promise of his God dispels all fear,  
Mock at the terrors, which ye seem to dread,  
Let not his noble indignation stir  
Your minds to harbour splenetic retort :  
Rather rejoice that Israel yet can boast  
Hero like him, to lead her armies on  
To glorious conquests, of which ye despair.”—

He said : his voice, his action and his smile  
Of gentle reconciliation, all conspir'd  
To set him off with such resistless grace, .  
No murmur now was heard ; but forth they went,  
Nor halted till at Hamath they arriv'd,  
And view'd the ancient seat of Canaan's son,  
Fam'd Amatheus, now encompass'd round  
With lofty walls and battlements of proof.  
Behind it rises the stupendous range  
Of far-extending Libanus, so nam'd

From the white frankincense which there was found,  
Or haply from the snows, that still display  
Perennial winter on its hoary head :  
Yet, in its lower regions, various groves  
Of pine and cyprus cloath'd its swelling sides ;  
'The pale-green olive gave its unctuous fruit,  
And plants unnumber'd precious gums distill'd ;  
But above all th' imperial cedar tow'r'd,  
Slow in his growth, but when mature, he stands,  
While ages pass, indignant of decay.

With Libanus their northern progress clos'd :  
Thence westward to the ocean, (which some call'd  
The Syrian, others the Phœnician sea)  
O'er Maspha's district journeying, they arriv'd  
At Sidon, seat of commerce and of arts.  
O'er the whole world, then known, this central mart,  
This mistress of the sea, diffus'd the wealth  
Of Asia, and connected with herself  
Regions, which, coloniz'd by Japhet's race,  
To other states were scarce by rumour known.

On a vast rock, that o'er the subject waves  
Sublimely rises, Canaan's eldest son  
With happy choice the strong foundations lay'd  
Of his new capital, by sea and land  
Favour'd alike ; for here a spacious plain  
Luxuriant tecm'd with nature's varied stores ;  
There flow'd refreshing streams, there mantling vines  
Bent with delicious fruits, and luscious canes  
Spontaneous grew, whose tubes were fill'd with juice,  
Sweet as the treasures of the lab'ring bee.

In times, of which no certain date remains,  
Phœnicia's mariners on the vast sea  
Launch'd their advent'rous barks, taught the wild waves  
To witness the supremacy of man,  
And, steering by their starry chart, convey'd  
To distant shores the products of the east,  
Till Sidon grasp'd the commerce of the world.  
Here the admiring twelve, as to the port  
They brought their specious merchandize, beheld  
The rich Sabæans with their precious charge

Of gold and silver, aromatic gums,  
Myrrh, aloes, cassia, cinnamon and spice :  
The proud Assyrians with their costly silks :  
With their high-temper'd steel the Damascènes ;  
And Babylonians with their various works  
Of gay embroidery and burnisht gold :  
Dardanians from the lesser Asia's coasts :  
Those, who at Thasus, near the Thracian shore,  
From their deep mines the pond'rous ore extract :  
Those, who from Sicyon and from Corinth came,  
From Thebes, where Cadmus the Phœnician rul'd,  
From Attica, from Argos, and the plains  
Of Thessaly, for hardy horsemen fan'd :  
There too from Hellas, which beyond the sea  
Of islands lies, Pelasgians might be seen,  
Who thither brought the civilizing arts  
From their maternal Crete, ere while a den  
Of savage tribes, whose names the Muse rejects ;  
But, since from Sidon the sage brothers came,  
By Minos and by Rhadamanthus rul'd,

Crete in its matchless polity excell'd :  
Five nations then peopled this happy isle,  
And ninety cities overlook'd its plains,  
Fam'd through the world. Nor were these countries all  
Whose traders flock'd to Sidon's crowded port :  
From the far shores of Italy they came ;  
From Cades and Cartica, in the shock  
Of nature sever'd from the Libyan coasts ;  
And (wond'rous proof of navigation's art)  
There were of those, who, as their climate rough,  
Liv'd in far distant islands, newly found,  
On whose white cliffs the stormy billows beat,  
Impervious to all but Sidon's sons ;  
Who from the metals, which their mines contain'd,  
'These islands Cassiterides had nam'd.  
Untill'd, but not ungrateful, was their soil  
Their coasts involv'd in clouds, their rivers oft  
Lockt up in ice ; but freedom, which they lov'd,  
Made their clime genial and their sky serene.  
From Sidon to the filial port of Tyre



The associate band repair'd. In all her pride  
“ ‘The crowning city, mart of nations,” reign'd ;  
In palaces her “ princely merchants” dwelt,  
“ ‘The honourable of the earth ;” her gods  
In temples, whence their incens'd altars breath'd  
Sabæan odours to the wafting winds.  
Around their fountains, in the cooling hour  
Of ev'ning-fall, the mingling sexes met :  
No pause was then for tabret or for harp ;  
‘The soft love-ditty and the wanton dance  
Spceded the jocund hours ; alike too short  
‘The day for feasting and the night for love.  
In purple vest, on his Arabian steed,  
From forth the porches of his stately court  
‘The trader issued ; on his turban'd front  
‘The yellow sard, the jacinth fiery red  
And golden topaz blaz'd : he had amass'd  
Whatever navigation could extract  
From ransackt nature to augment his stores ;  
Which, though with ‘Thasian silver, gems and gold

Of India pil'd, yet shone with massy heaps  
Of useful tin, at easy price obtain'd  
From the rude miners of the western isles,  
In the mid ocean seated. " Here to pause,  
(To his assembled brethren Joshua cried)  
In contemplation of these gaudy scenes  
Is not for us. I surfeit on the sight  
Of this voluptuous, this unmanly race.  
What are the treasures, which the feeble hands  
Of those, who hoard them up, cannot defend ?  
If courage be not found where commerce reigns,  
Her fall is but postpon'd, till some bold chief,  
Whose hardy warriors carry on their backs  
Their one day's sustenance, and to their swords  
Trust for the morrow's meal, shall pour his tide  
Of hungry ravagers to raze their walls,  
And float their markets and their streets with blood.  
Then on the brow barbaric will be seen  
The flaming carbuncle, the diamond pure,  
And ruby, blushing to be so misplac'd.

This is your doom, ye cities, ill aware  
How sure destruction follows in the path  
Where luxury foreruns. Hence then, my friends,  
Hence let us go, and, passing Acon's walls,  
There to the Syrian shore we'll bid adieu."—

He said ; unwillingly they held their way  
Over the pebbly beach, till at the walls  
Of Acon they arriv'd. Aloft it stood,  
As if by nature destin'd to repel  
The assault of some fell ravager, and crown  
Its brave defenders with immortal fame  
Here fording Cison's and Jeptael's streams,  
Mageddo's wide-extended plain they cross'd,  
With corn and vines and olive-groves replete.  
'Thence to Jezrael's lofty brow they came ;  
Whence Libanus and Galilæa's fields,  
'The Jordan's course and the far-trending vale,  
Their future heritage, before them lay.  
Sichem they pass'd, 'midst Ephraim's mountains built,  
Once the sad scene of blood unfairly shed,

When Jacob's sons, revenging Dinah's wrong,  
Hamor and his defenceless race surpris'd.  
Here Joshua led them to the aged oak,  
Yet bearing leaf, beneath whose spreading shade  
That holy patriarch buried deep the gods  
Of Laban, by his daughter Rachel spoil'd  
Of his false Teraphim : nor did he fail  
To visit Joseph's field ; at sight whereof—  
“ Behold, he cried, and piously approach  
This sacred spot, in which we must inter  
Our patron ancestor's time-honour'd corpse,  
When the appointed period shall arrive  
For heav'n to plant us in the promis'd land.”—

Now Salem's venerable walls they sought,  
Where he, of righteousness and peace the king,  
Auspicious type of greater King to come,  
Of God most high the priest, founded his throne  
On that predestin'd mount, where after-times  
Beheld the temple of Jehovah rise  
Upon the ruins of the pagan fanes.

He to the patriarch Abram in the vale  
Of Shavch brought the elemental dole  
Of bread and wine, and gave the great all-hail—  
“ Blessed be Abram of the most high God !”—  
And, by receiving tithe of all the spoil,  
Thenceforth confirm'd the sacerdotal right.  
But Salem, now by Canaan's race usurp'd,  
And plung'd in gross idolatry, had lost  
Of righteousness and peace the very names :  
Nor dar'd the cautious twelve approach the walls,  
Where dwelt the sons of Jebus, and where stood  
The sumptuous palace and strong citadel  
Of proud Adonizedeck, their fierce king.

A mount there was, with olives thickly cloath'd,  
And from the town divided by the vale  
Of Cedron, and its gently-murmuring brook.  
To this inviting solitude they came,  
To seek concealment and repose. The sun  
Had reach'd his western goal ; the distant hills  
Were tinted with his last retiring beams :

Silent was all around them ; nature's self  
Sunk to repose, as o'er the darken'd scene  
Night's solemn shades in slow gradation stole.  
Here whilst outstretcht upon the mossy turf  
The way-worn travellers invited sleep,  
Sudden and loud from forth a neighb'ring grove  
Shrieks as of tortur'd wretches, mixt with shouts  
Of barbarous exultation, and strange peals  
Of laughter, such as maniacs in their fits  
Raving are heard to vent, burst on the ear.  
Rous'd from their lair they started, and beheld,  
By the red glare of torches wav'd on high,  
A savage multitude, headed by some,  
Who, in the garb of priests, in chorus hoarse  
And dissonant were chaunting forth their hymns,  
Which none but demons might endure to hear.  
Rooted with fear the recreant ten remain'd,  
Whilst Joshua with his ever-faithful friend,  
Curious to spy their impious rites, went forth  
To a remoter quarter of the wood.

There, in a secret glade, encompass'd round  
With thick embowering oaks, an altar, rear'd  
With stones enormous, form'd the massy base,  
Whereon the statue of grim Moloch stood,  
Of giant-like proportion : all below  
Was in the garb and fashion of a man,  
Whilst from his neck a bull's enormous head  
Stretch'd forward, with expanded jaws and throat  
Wide-op'ning to disclose the dreadful gulph,  
Which deep within the cavern'd idol ran.

The monstrous image was of brass compos'd,  
Which, heated by the fires that blaz'd around,  
From head to foot seem'd one transparent mass  
Of glowing metal : when (all-gracious heav'n !)  
Behold, a priest with rapid step advanc'd ;  
His rolling eyeballs glar'd, his teeth were clench'd,  
Whilst in his hellish grasp a babe he bore,  
And tow'rds the blazing idol fiercely strode,  
Regardless of its infant innocence  
And pity-moving cry : when from the wood

A frantic female rush'd, and quick as thought  
The hoary ruffian follow'd ; on her knees,  
With desperate hands entwin'd about his robe—  
“ Spare him, ah spare my child !” she cried, and fell  
Exhausted at his feet. He, nothing mov'd  
By the keen agony that shook her frame,  
Disdainfully survey'd her—“ Woman, hence !  
Fiercely he cried, our god must be appeas'd.  
Dar'st thou complain that his propitious choice  
Falls on thy offspring, honour'd as thou art  
And blest, that with the firstling of thy womb  
His sacred rage is stay'd ? Away ! No more  
Our awful rites impede. Hark ! Moloch calls,  
And thus his dread commandment we obey.”—  
With that he forward rush'd, and with fell aim  
Into the brazen mouth his victim cast.  
It sunk, it perish'd. 'This when Calcb saw,  
Heart-stricken, he exclaim'd—“ Can nature bear  
This execrable sight ? shall that dire fiend  
Live ? No ; this hand shall strike him dead to earth.”—



This while he said, with sudden grasp and strong  
Joshua had seiz'd his wrist, and thus appeal'd—

“ Hold ! I conjure you by the living God,  
Throw not away that life, which is His gift,  
And to His service in your country's cause  
Is pledg'd for nobler uses than to slay  
One priest, when the whole impious crew shall fall  
Under your sword by thousands. Are you mad,  
That you would follow that devoted babe  
Into the burning cauldron, and expire  
A sport for pagans and a feast for fiends ?  
Or promise patience, or renounce at once  
Your reason, your religion and your friend.”—

“ I will be patient—nay, behold I am !  
Replied the youth ; swear only to inflict  
Unsparing vengeance on these bloody priests,  
Their beastly idols and accursed groves.”—

“ Enough ! the firm and temp'rate virtue cried,  
There needs not this to me. I have not been  
Insensible, although not mad as you ;

And where my heart hath treasur'd up its hope  
 My pray'r, I trust, is heard."—No more he said,  
 But to the Mount of Olives turn'd his steps.  
 Pensive awhile they pass'd, till Caleb, now  
 No longer able to suppress his grief,  
 Thus in soft accents the sad silence broke—  
 " Restore me to your friendship ; let me see  
 Your eyes, as they were wont, look kindly on me :  
 If for one fault you cast me off, alas !  
 How is it I have hitherto escap'd,  
 Having so many ? You command my heart."

    " 'Twere time, said Joshua, to command yourself.  
 Were we sent forth to rush upon a throng  
 Of furious zealots ? Would the Lord be pleas'd  
 With our self-sacrifice ? For can you think  
 That you had died alone ? No, Caleb, no ;  
 Friendship's strong cords hang not on me so light  
 As on our cautious brethren in the mount,  
 Whose hearts, unharness'd by the slightest touch  
 Of danger, break away and range at large,

Like horses loos'd from labour. Had we fall'n,  
'They had return'd at once, and told their tale  
Nor to the advantage of the truth nor us.  
Wonder not then I struggled to preserve  
The bravest hero in our Israel's host,  
And the best, dearest friend I have on earth."

He said, and, whilst returning to the mount,  
The faithful pair together took their way,  
Thus, after thoughtful silence, Joshua spake—  
" I'm thinking, Caleb, how debas'd and vile  
Those natures are, who can devise a form,  
Half man, half beast, modell'd of stone or brass,  
The work of their own hands, and call it god.  
What are those gods, which by such hands are made  
And what the makers, who o'erlook the power,  
That gave to universal nature life,  
And brought that very matter into form,  
Of which these monster-idols are compos'd ?  
This in itself is senseless, impious, gross ;  
But when they make their children pass through fire,

As we have witness'd, is it in the power  
Of words to speak the horrors of their sin,  
Which stifles mercy in the hearts of men,  
Blots out the heav'ns and makes this earth a hell ?  
When holy Abram on Moriah's mount  
Had sacrific'd his son, God stay'd his hand.  
'Twas wondrous faith ; but why that faith was prov'd  
By a commandment, from which nature shrinks,  
Is, at the present, mystery too profound  
For our conjecture. This to after-times  
May be disclos'd ; then what to us is dark,  
To them shall be transparent as the light,  
When some far greater sacrifice, of which  
This off'ring was the type shall be reveal'd.  
Then, if these pagans have surviv'd our swords,  
And Sinai's revelation hath not serv'd  
T' exterminate the demons, that usurp  
The worship of the nations, heav'n at length  
May in its mercy bid a light arise,  
To rescue and illumine lost mankind.

And now, whilst visions of a time to come  
Are beaming on my soul, methinks I feel  
An awful intimation, that 'tis here,  
And on these neighb'ring mounts, though now defil'd  
With rites abominable, God shall plant  
His tabernacle, and from hence diffuse  
That blessed light, which shall redeem the world."  
Thus Joshua spake ; with reverence Caleb heard  
And treasur'd up his words within his heart.

In the mid space of Heav'n now rode the moon,  
When Joshua gave the signal to depart,  
And, crossing Cedron's brook, betwixt the grove  
Defil'd by Moloch their infernal god,  
And Sion's walls, within whose guilty fence  
The fierce Adonizedeck proudly dwelt,  
With silent step they hastily advanc'd.  
As tim'rous deer, or ere the deep-mouth'd hounds  
Make the wide forest echo with their cry,  
Oft turning back their heads, oft stopping short  
To ascertain if their dread foes be near,

Speed o'er the plain to seek the wood's recess ;  
So in th' obscure of night the twelve pursu'd  
Their course by Bethlem o'er the vale, nor stopp'd,  
Till at the first faint tinge of morning break  
They left the beaten path, and to a grove  
Of ancient oaks, that near Thecua rose,  
With speed repair'd, and there consum'd the day.

Sad hours were these for the desponding ten,  
And many a look, presaging discontent,  
They cast on Joshua ; for privation now  
Put patience to the test : sullen they sate,  
And heavy were their hearts. The next night came,  
And their dark journey brought no better fare  
Than the wild berries of the bush supplied,  
Nor warmer lodging than a deep damp cave,  
Which near Odolla ran within the rock.  
Here whilst they lay, they felt the keen arrest  
Of hunger, creditor severe, whose claims  
On bankrupt nature will not be appeas'd  
E'en by necessity's imperious plea.

This Caleb saw, and, pitying their distress,  
“ Comrades, he cried, when mis’ry bears you down  
Humanity and honour call me forth,  
Whate’er the risque, to venture in your cause.  
Not far remote imperial Hebron stands,  
The proud metropolis of Anak’s sons :  
Thither I go; and either bring you food,  
Or perish in th’ attempt.” Silent they heard,  
And look’d suspicion (such is the effect  
Of generous motives upon sordid minds)  
And Shaphat blush’d and Gaddiel droop’d his head.  
Meantime the youth arose and seiz’d his staff,  
And o’er his shoulder flung his empty sack,  
And in the act of parting grasp’d the hand  
Of Joshua ; he, as if by magic spell,  
Leapt on his feet—“ Have patience, he exclaim’d ;  
One sack will not suffice to hold the store,  
Which the ripe wants of our associates claim.  
Once I have snatch’d thee from impending death ;  
Now I am with thee, Caleb. In this cause

To fall were glorious, to succeed would crown  
Our days with happiness. Farewell, my friends !  
Parting he cried ; expect us with the dawn."

He said, and forth the brave advent'urers went.  
Deep in their gloomy cave the ten remain'd,  
Hungry and chill and overcome with toil,  
Yet fear forbad their heavy eyes to close,  
And none propos'd to watch whilst others slept ;  
For by no ties of friendship were they bound  
Each to the other, nor had common cause,  
Save in the joint resolve to throw contempt  
And absolute discredit on the hope,  
Cherish'd by Joshua, to excite the war  
With nations, which invincible they deem'd.  
The shepherd's words weigh'd heavy on their hearts,  
And what that false deceiver would have said,  
Had Joshua not oppos'd, their fears supplied.  
Some in the baseness of their souls propos'd  
Instant escape ; but even that t' attempt  
Presented perils, which they dar'd not face,



But under guidance of their gallant chiefs ;  
For though they held them in their bitt'rest hate,  
Still they rever'd their courage. Some there were  
In treason so deep-sighted, as to spy  
A project to desert them in their need,  
And let them die by famine in their cave :  
So minds debas'd can torture gen'rous acts :  
And thus, by terrors haunted, hunger-pinch'd,  
Hag-ridden by the demon at their hearts,  
Suspicious, tost from thought to thought, they watch'd  
The lagging hours of night, nor other food  
Had they, save that, on which the viper feeds.

Meanwhile, o'er Mamre's vale the faithful pair  
Their course pursu'd ; when lo ! a giant band  
Of Anakim appear'd ; them to avoid,  
Awhile they sought the covert of the wood ;  
But soon at Hebron's high-embattl'd walls  
Unquestion'd they arriv'd. Before the gate  
There was a fountain : in their peasant garb  
They stood, and watch'd the looks of all who pass'd.

At length a matron decently attir'd  
Came to the fountain's brink : grave was her look,  
And pensive sadness sate upon her brow.  
Her they address'd, and courteously enquir'd  
If she would deign their service to accept ;  
She smiling render'd for their proffer thanks,  
And when, returning from the spring, they gave  
Into her hands the vessel they had fill'd,  
She ask'd them who they were and whence they came.  
They answer'd they were peasants, (as agreed),  
And came to buy supplies of needful food.  
With glance significant she scan'd them o'er,  
And gave them sign to follow : they obey'd,  
But still at distance ; when before a house,  
Without the city wall, the matron stopp'd.  
Again she turn'd and look'd and gave them sign  
To enter : still no word had pass'd her lips.  
She set before them meat and bread and wine,  
Inviting them, by action well exprest,  
To share in what her frugal means supplied :

They eat, and were refresh'd : that done, she said—

“ Think it not strange, that I to men unknown  
Have thus conceded shelter and relief :

But by your noble bearing I perceive

Ye are not what ye seem ; that peasant garb

But ill conceals you. Shrewdly I suspect

Ye are of those whom Anak and his sons

Are now intent to seize. Joshua to this—

“ We pray thee think us what we state ourselves.

You have reliev'd our need ; oppress us not

With your suspicion. Meanwhile be assur'd

Th' immediate wants of us and of the friends,

Who look to us for succour, are not feign'd,

Whatever we may be. Now, matron, say

If true benevolence can ask or wish

To draw confession from us beyond this.”—

“ Nor should I, she rejoin'd, require your pledge,  
Were I not ready to deposit mine—

The one, omnipotent, eternal God,

Whom ye adore, I honour and believe—

Now do I know you ? Now have I exchang'd  
Confession with you, dang'rous as your own ?  
Ye are of Israel ; ye are of the twelve,  
Of whom the sons of Anak are in quest :  
Your course is trac'd, your persons are describ'd,  
And dreadful tortures will attend your death,  
If ye escape not. Anak is appris'd  
Of Amalek's defeat, and on the shrine  
Of his god Moloch are inscrib'd the names  
Of Joshua and of Caleb, Israel's chiefs,  
Doom'd and devoted to th' infernal pow'rs."—

“ Behold them present ! Joshua straight exclaim'd ;  
Caleb and I are present.”—On her knees  
Instant the matron dropp'd, and press'd her lips  
Upon their hands, and thus with fervour pray'd.

“ Hail, ye renowned heroes ! May your God  
In safety bear you hence, and bring you back  
With vict'ry to redeem the ancient seat  
Of your forefathers. Here in Hebron dwelt  
The patriarch Abram ; Isaac here abode ;

Here Jacob sojourn'd, till at Joseph's call  
To Goshen's land his household he remov'd.  
Ancient of cities, it retain'd the law  
And worship of the one true God : at length  
A race of monsters from Philistia came ;  
Fell Arba led their desolating hordes ;  
Him Anak follow'd, who, with iron rod,  
Now rules the bleeding realm. Still there are some,  
Who secretly their ancient faith retain,  
And in God's promise confidently trust :  
Such one am I ; beneath this roof obscure,  
Each morn and eve my pray'rs are sent to Heav'n,  
For the completion of the blissful hope,  
That Jacob's offspring hither shall return,  
These Anakim to crush, and in their stead  
Our fathers' pure religion to restore.  
And now farewell ! Escape, whilst yet you may :  
The moment favours ; waste it not in words.  
Take for your comrades what their need requires :  
Offer me no return ; 'tis freely yours,

And what I give to you, I give to God:-

Hence ! and may heav'nly mercy be your guide !”

She said, and, anxious to prevent reply,

Led them in silence to her outward gate,

That open'd to the plain. Then spake the chief—

“ We see the hand of God outstretcht to save,

And follow where it points. Blest shalt thou be,

Thou virtuous relict of the ancient faith,

For this thy pious act. If we survive,

Israel shall bear memorial of thy love,

And Moses will record thee in his pray'rs—

Farewell at once !” the parting heroes cried,

Alternate press'd their lips upon her hand,

And, wrapt in darkness, speeded to the cave,

Where their expecting comrades gladly shar'd

The widow's timely dole. When the next night

Had spread its friendly shadows o'er the earth,

Their now-recruited strength suffic'd to reach

The range of mountains, that near Jermuth rise ;

And thence descending to the fertile vale,

Through which meand'ring the clear Sorec flows,  
They pluck'd those fruits, pomegranates, figs and grapes,  
Which, when display'd to the admiring eyes  
Of the assembled elders, gave such proof  
Of the rich produce of the promis'd land.

Hence, betwixt Jethur and Taphua's walls,  
Across a wide and cultivated plain,  
Protected by the shades of night, they pass'd.  
Here they survey'd the spot, where Abel fell  
Beneath the murd'ring hand of envious Cain :  
Here too they visited the gloomy cave,  
Its stony couches and its limpid rill,  
Where our first parents sorrow'd for his loss.

Thence, having cross'd the rugged heights of Seir,  
To th' camp at Kadesh-Barnea they return'd,  
And clos'd a pilgrimage of forty days.

Alas! that now we must prepare to give  
A dark and dismal picture of mankind !

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

## BOOK THE SIXTH.

### ARGUMENT.

*TUMULT occasioned by the report of the spies—Conspiracy and rebellion of the Israelites—Destruction of Korah and his associates.*





# THE EXODIAD.

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## BOOK THE SIXTH.

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NO more, reposing on the mossy turf  
In Hermon's soft recesses, or beside  
The winding Jordan may we sit, and teach  
His stream to murmur in melodious verse :  
Horrors demand us now ; a mournful Muse,  
Pall'd in funereal black, prepares to strike  
The deep-ton'd harp, while on the topmost peak  
Of Seir's high rock the boding raven sits,  
Scenting the Stygian blast, that, o'er the camp  
Of Israel hov'ring to discharge its plagues,

Rides in the morbid air. A thousand fiends,  
Banding to rescue their devoted groves,  
Spread their broad vans, and make a hideous night  
From flank to flank of the o'ershadow'd host.  
For, till rebellion's sin shall be aton'd,  
The great arch-enemy of man shall hold  
Usurp'd dominion over human minds :  
Still hell's dark legions shall enjoy a truce,  
Still the commission'd angel shall persist  
To stay the hand of Joshua from his sword,  
Till the fell pestilence hath done its work,  
And the deep chambers of the cavern'd earth,  
Rent by the voice of an avenging God  
Down to their dark foundations, shall engulph  
The miserable victims of his wrath.

Now dawn'd the day, that shall for ever stand  
Black in the calendar of Israel's sins,  
When fierce dissention, and profane distrust  
Of God's recorded promise, turn'd the hearts  
Of Israel's princes, now in council met,

To league with Korah, and renounce their faith  
In him who held the heav'n-appointed charge  
Of leading them from bondage to the land,  
Where, but for their rebellion, they had found  
Rest and a sure inheritance of peace.

The chiefs were summon'd, and the seats were full :  
All, that bore rule in Israel, were to hear  
What the commission'd twelve had to impart  
Of those far regions, heretofore unknown,  
Now in their circuit travers'd and explor'd.  
They, while on them each eager eye was cast,  
And anxious expectation mark'd each brow,  
With Joshua and with Caleb at their head,  
Both bright in arms, (their functions now resum'd)  
Expectant stood apart. Now silence reign'd,  
When Moses from his high tribunal rose,  
And thus in brief appropriate terms announc'd  
Th' important matter of their grave consult—

“ Princes of Israel, soldiers of your God,  
And ye, who minister his sacred rites,

(For wisdom priz'd, as these for valour fam'd)  
Much it rejoices me to meet you here,  
Complete in numbers, honouring the call  
Of me, your servant, in respect of Him,  
Who is the Lord and Master of us all.  
We now are met to render thanks to God,  
And gratulate the safe return of these  
Our patriot brethren, who, in forty days,  
(Great their dispatch, and great hath been their toil)  
Have made a circuit of the promis'd land.  
They are now present, and to the report,  
Which they in conscience and in truth shall make  
Of that now-travers'd region, ye will give  
Such solemn hearing and such serious thought,  
As matter so momentous strictly claims.  
With none amongst them have I converse held,  
Nor seen them till this instant: they will speak,  
Free and without suppression or reserve,  
Of what imports us most to be appris'd,  
Touching the warlike posture of the land,

Which soon or late, on you or on your sons,  
By the surc word of promise shall devolve.  
Therefore, I pray you, brethren, be prepar'd,  
For your own sakes, to hear and fairly weigh  
In your clear judgment, what the army's chief,  
Who worthily resumes that high command,  
May now deliver to your equal ears."

He said, when Joshua at the call advanc'd,  
And, not unconscious, that, amongst the band  
Of his late comrades, there were some prepar'd  
To combat his encouraging report,  
Thus with unqualified decision spake—

" Princes, the land, that we were sent to search,  
Is strong, and rich in produce. We have made  
A circuit, wide as our commission went,  
Clear from the confines of the Syrian realm  
To Tyre and Sidon on the Western sea.  
Azor and Salem, of our pagan foe  
Imperial cities, jointly we beheld ;  
But Hebron, seat of Abram and his sons,

By Caleb and myself alone was seen.  
I state not this, as glancing blame on these,  
Who shar'd our labours ; ample was the plea  
For their detention : but if they shall tell  
Of giant Anakim, as chance they may,  
And fearfully describe their monstrous bulk,  
'They speak not from the evidence of sight,  
As I and Caleb may. The men are tall,  
Misshapen, huge, a burden to themselves,  
And such as only, when at distance view'd,  
May catch the warrior's eye, but, in the charge  
Of battle, will be fac'd without alarm.  
Of Jabin's host we took a near survey ;  
A multitude it was of various hordes,  
The gathering of the nations ; but a mass  
So ill compacted, formless, and inert,  
Their very numbers, which should be their strength,  
Were in effect their weakness. Such our foe,  
And such the slight account I hold of them,  
Their armies and defences : sure I am,

Let Israel only to itself be true,  
Their kings, their cities, and their gods shall fall  
Before the armies of the living Lord."

Thus as he spake the mantling colour rose  
Bright on his glowing cheek, and vict'ry seem'd  
To mark him for her own : but in the hearts  
Of numbers there assembled envy lurk'd,  
Pride, and the stubborn prejudice of age,  
Ever averse to counsel of the young,  
Whose courage they call rashness ; whilst the chiefs,  
Jealous of his command, were ill dispos'd  
To add one laurel to that conqu'ror's wreath,  
Whose fame already threw them into shade.

This Dathan saw, and as the flitting breeze,  
That comes low-murn'ring o'er the curled waves,  
Sings in the seaman's well-experienc'd ear  
Its prelude to the storm, so when the hum  
Of discontented voices mark'd that now  
Tumult was rising, up the traitor sprung,  
And thus in style abrupt provok'd debate.



“ I rise to warn you, princes, of the wrong  
Your dignity may suffer, should ye grant  
Unqualified permission to the chief  
Of Israel's army to declare for war,  
'Till ye shall hear what others may advise,  
By your election honour'd with a trust  
Of no less weight and import than his own.  
If all, that he shall say, be said by all,  
Let him proceed, and teach us to subdue  
A country, strong by nature and by art,  
Whose men are giants, and whose kings command  
Unconquer'd armies, and those armies full.  
But if these warriors, whom your tribes decreed  
To share his duties, should not share his hopes,  
I trust your candour will esteem it meet  
To hear on both sides, and concede to them  
The right, which he already hath assum'd.”—

He ceas'd, and Shammua, thus invited, spake—  
“ If Joshua and his friend of Judah's tribe  
Are those, in whom alone your trust was lodg'd,

We, your degraded servants, have endur'd  
Much toil and peril, only to be taught  
This mortifying truth on our return,  
That two opinions rule, though ten dissent."

Thus, with concerted brevity, he spake,  
When Gaddiel, in whose ranc'rous bosom lurk'd  
The unextinguish'd memory of the scorn  
By Caleb cast on his unmanly fear  
And captious sophistry, when from the grove  
By Azor's walls he view'd the pagan host,  
And counsell'd base despair, now saw his time  
To foster that dispute and strife of tongues,  
In which his dastard genius took delight ;  
And lowly bowing to th' assembled chiefs,  
Thus with feign'd candour, which too often serves  
To mask malicious purpose, he began

" Elders, and ye of Benjamin the prime,  
My honour'd patrons ! Shammua, the elect  
Of Reuben, fully, though in few, hath said  
What all, save Caleb, are prepar'd to vouch.

Sad truth it is, we cannot back those hopes  
With any honest judgment of our own,  
Which Joshua cherishes, and hath deriv'd  
From sources, that inspire us with despair.  
All men are fallible, and ten may err  
Where two, of brighter intellect, may mark  
Distinctions rightly. So with us 'twill be,  
If Joshua and if Caleb shall prevail  
Against our judgments to dispose your minds  
To warlike enterprize ; which if they do,  
We pray you bear us clear of the result,  
Should ye, (which Heav'n forbid !) bewail the hour,  
That lur'd you to believe those vaunting words,  
That carry with them an imposing sound  
Of bold encouragement, but to our ears  
Convey no meaning and present no hope.  
Princes, ye held us worthy of your choice,  
We went forth at your bidding, and have seen,  
Albeit, with other eyes, what Joshua saw—  
The strong and warlike posture of the land :

We bring you of its fruits—behold ! As these,  
So are its habitants, in growth and strength  
Stupendous, matchless, above nature vast,  
And countless beyond computation's reach.  
The army of the Canaanitish king,  
With all his tributary legions fill'd,  
Pass'd in review before us ; should we say  
That Israel could withstand that world in arms,  
And close with Joshua for immediate march,  
We might indeed have peace with him, but war  
With our own consciences. We cannot sin  
Against the truth, and therefore must abide  
The scorn which Caleb now prepares to hurl  
On us, your servants, and, through us, on you."

He ceas'd, and instantly the gallant chief  
Advanc'd to speak. Some with loud voices call'd  
On Moses to repress his forward zeal ;  
Some rose, and would have broke the council up ;  
When Caleb, nothing daunted, loud exclaim'd—  
" Princes of Judah, I appeal to you ;

Protect my right, and hear me in reply,  
Orsec me drag this pale accuser forth,  
Now shrinking from my sight, of whose base fears,  
Through the whole progress of our joint emprise,  
Were I to tell, 'twould cover him with shame :  
But this unworthy tale ye shall not hear.  
Warriors, to you I speak ! will you submit  
To let this babbler talk your spirit down,  
And damp that confidence, which ye derive  
Not only from your valour, but your faith  
In God, your guide, your lawgiver and king ?  
Joshua hath truly said the land is good ;  
It is God's gift, and shall be *bread* to us :  
If we deserve it of Him, it is ours,  
And its defences shall be gone, and fall  
Before our armies, so we faithful prove."

Now burst the clamour from an hundred tongues,  
Whilst over all, pre-eminently loud,  
The acrimonious, shrill, and fiend-like yell  
Of Dathan, ruler of the storm, was heard—

“ Hah ! is it so ? Elders and chiefs, he cried,  
So must we sit and be condemn’d to hear  
A railing accusation, and submit  
To let a beardless insolent arraign  
Those, whom ten tribes have sanction’d by their choice ?  
Rise, princes, rise ! If ye have feeling left  
For your own dignity, arise, and thrust  
This railer from your council ! ”—On the word  
Forth burst the clamour, louder than the first,  
And the whole faction started from their seats.

Caleb the whilst, with Joshua by his side,  
Untroubled stood, nor was there one, who dar’d  
Approach to harm him, for his ready hand,  
Seizing his falchion with determin’d grasp,  
Spoke terrible resistance ; whilst his eye,  
Now fix’d on Dathan, mark’d him out for death,  
If but a touch had stirr’d him. The base throng  
Roll’d back, nor was there of the factious ten  
One, that essay’d to face him, whilst with scorn  
Awfully frowning in mid space he stood.

Moses at length, with majesty serene,  
Silent till now, arose ; whercat the din  
Of voices ceas'd, when thus the prophet spake.

“ Princes and elders, in the awful name  
Of Israel's God I warn you to beware.  
The dreadful punishment, of you unseen,  
Is to my sight reveal'd : provoke it not ;  
Partake not in their councils, who have left  
Their hearts in Egypt : let not their distrust  
Contaminate your faith in Him, whose word  
Is truth unchangeable. Oh, heedless men !  
My heart is rent with anguish for your sakes :  
Remember Sinai's mount, on which your God  
In fire descended ; ye have heard his laws ;  
See ye obey them ; ye have now no plea ;  
Nor will He longer, as in former time,  
Spare you rebellious. Wherefore this distrust ?  
Hath God withdrawn the promise, which He made  
To your forefathers ? Emulate their faith,  
And Canaan is your own. So Israel's chief,

The conqueror of Amalek, hath said :  
This also ye have heard with zeal confirm'd  
By Caleb, who, on that triumphant day,  
Fought at his side ; and now let faction cease.  
Hear what the Lord decrees. Hence to your tents !  
And let to-morrow's sun see you in arms,  
Accoutred for your march. For lo ! the cloud,  
Where rides th' avenging angel, o'er your heads  
Hangs imminent : it bursts, and ye are lost."

He said, and paus'd, awaiting their reply ;  
But none essay'd to speak : for, as he glanc'd  
His eye heart-searching on the factious chiefs,  
Abash'd they shrunk, and, ere it met their lips,  
The meditated murmur died away.

This when he noted, instantly disarm'd  
By their meek seeming, with uplifted hands  
In supplicative attitude he stood,  
And breath'd the sorrows of his soul in pray'r ;  
Whilst melting pity o'er his face benign  
Its soft suffusion shed. This Dathan saw,



And as his harden'd conscience never knew  
Motive for pray'r but terror and alarm,  
Therefore he deem'd his triumph near at hand,  
And cheer'd his faction with malicious smile.  
'The pray'r, of them unmerited, was lost ;  
Not so the piety of him, who pray'd.  
Yet once again the prophet thus rejoin'd—  
“ Remember, brethren, that on your resolves  
The fate of Israel hangs. We meet no more ;  
Or march to-morrow, or for ever thence  
Despair of Canaan.”—Words he added none,  
But, gathering up his mantle, forth he went.

Like troops dismiss'd at their commander's word,  
(Order and rank no longer now observ'd)  
At once th' assembly rose. 'Th' indignant ten,  
Dispersing, to their several tribes repair'd ;  
There to enforce their mutinous appeal :  
For neither dread of their presiding seer,  
Nor Joshua's sanctity, nor Caleb's zeal  
Could banish from their memory the words

Of that deceiver, who on Jordan's brink,  
Parent of evil, had too deeply sow'd  
Rebellion's venom in the stubborn soil  
Of their degenerate bosoms, now to yield  
To better reason, and with shame confess,  
That two had counsell'd well where ten had err'd.  
Rather than this, with Dathan for their guide,  
And banded firm in Korah's desp'rate league,  
Eager they went to tell their glozing tale,  
And turn the hearts of Israel from their God.

Forty succeeding days had now revolv'd,  
Since the appointed twelve from Israel's camp  
Adventur'd forth to search the promis'd land,  
And still, unvisited by Heav'n's blest light,  
Dark in his tent apostate Korah dwelt,  
Outcast of God and man. Wretch more forlorn  
Earth did not own ; for day and night to him,  
Irksome and drear and comfortless alike,  
No grateful changes brought, that might induce  
Or rest or pause from memory, but still

Th' imprison'd horror rankled in the depth  
Of his relentless undiverted thought.  
Sleep, that at times with silent step will come  
To the sick couch, and soft oblivion bring,  
Blest visitant ! to sorrow-wounded souls,  
Came not to him : alien from God was he ;  
And Heav'n's bright messengers will not consort  
With hell's dark agents : for it is not sleep  
To herd with nightly spectres ; 'tis not rest  
To wander and be tossing on the flood  
Of wild imagination, till the soul  
Feels anguish more intolerably fierce  
Than all its waking torments.—Such the rest  
Of Korah, such his dreams. When, at the hour  
Of morn or ev'ning pray'r, the choral hymn  
Hallow'd Jehovah's name, then through the cells  
And channels of his phrensy-stricken brain  
Rage and confusion rush'd ; the solemn peal  
Broke on his ear like his salvation's knell,  
Whilst his vex'd conscience struggled, but too late,

To rend th' insatiate demon from his heart :  
Hopeless attempt ! The adamantine chain,  
Temper'd by fiends, and to the centre knit  
Of hell's tremendous furnace, held him fast.  
Dathan, who, busied in rebellion's cause,  
Of all authorities the foc, had spread  
Contagious discontent throughout the camp,  
Now at the close of day approach'd the tent  
Of Korah, who, from the disastrous night,  
That pledg'd him to perdition, had refus'd  
Access to all the league, with whom prevail'd  
Gloomy suspicions, that or death had quench'd,  
Or melancholy damp'd his flaming zeal  
For vengeance against Moses, which of late  
Had rag'd so fiercely. Him the factious chief  
Of Reuben found no longer now immur'd  
Repulsive to enquiry, but pass'd on,  
Led by the glimmering lamp to where he lay  
In curtain'd privacy : before his couch  
The kindred traitor stood, pond'ring the change,

Which in his ghastly visage had been wrought,  
Since with that fiend infernal he had held  
Impious communion, and allegiance pledg'd  
To his soul's loss. "What agony is this,  
That weighs so heavy upon Korah's health,  
Dathan exclaim'd, and how hath it occur'd,  
When Sinai's fires are out, and Moses sinks,  
Like an extinguisht meteor, into shade,  
'That thou, the day-star of our rising hope,  
'The chosen of our Israel above all  
'The sons of Levi, buried in this gloom  
Art to be sought of me, when thou thyself  
Should'st be the first to welcome and enjoy  
The triumphs, that await thy coming forth?"

"Dathan, replied the Levite, I perceive  
You gaze upon me, and conclude me lost,  
Deaf to the call of glorious great revenge,  
Absent, insensible, a wretch distraught.  
Chang'd I may be in feature, but my mind,  
Fixt as the centre of the firm-set earth,

Though tempests rend its surface, braves the storm :  
Death may dissolve this perishable frame,  
Peace to this bosom never may return ;  
But the unsated hatred, that I bear  
To him, who, from the morning of my day  
To this sad hour when now my sun declines,  
Hath still o'ershow'd all my brighter hopes,  
And laid me bare to scorn, that sense of wrong,  
Present to every hour, and woven close  
In the firm fibres that enfold my heart,  
Never but with my being can expire.  
You came to tell me that the spies have brought  
Report of Canaan's land, that ill accords  
With Joshua's and with Caleb's lust for war :  
Project devoid of reason, and too gross  
To pass on ign'rance, and escape contempt.  
It needs not this to tell. Did Moses think  
That none could trace their steps ; that what was known  
To all the camp of Israel, was unknown  
To the protecting powers, whose cause it is

T' uphold the nations, that invoke their names,  
Incense their altars, and revere their groves ?  
This if he thought, most fatally he err'd,  
And wrought his own confusion and disgrace.  
Are there no spies except what he employs ?  
Yes, in the peopled regions of the air  
Innumerable is the volant host  
Of swift intelligencers, that conspire  
'To thwart his pride and traverse his designs.  
And now the hour approaches—nay, 'tis come,  
That betwixt me and Moses ends the strife :  
Both cannot move and live ; both cannot soar,  
And wield their orbs and circle in one sphere ;  
Or I, or he, must perish in the shock.  
The warning, that I have, is not of man :  
I rest on auguries. Be not amaz'd ;  
Eye me not with suspect, when thus I trench  
On matters beyond reason, nor believe  
That I am therefore unpossess of mind :  
That, which I speak, I know, and more could speak

Than I have yet divulg'd. 'Ten of the twelve,  
Who visited the land, dissuade th' attempt  
Which Moses favours, and they shall prevail.  
Rebellion's torrent, bursting through the breach  
Of that authority which stemm'd its flood,  
Inundates all the camp. Moses may spread  
His hands to heav'n, and, as at Sinai's base,  
Fall to the earth entranc'd ; he shall not move  
One Israelite to step a cubit's length  
Nearer to Canaan than where now he stands.  
Though other mortal than yourself alone  
None have I seen, or suffer'd to approach  
This veil'd obscurity, in which I pass  
My solitary hours, yet this I know ;  
And, knowing this, within my gloomy tent  
Darkling I'll sit, nor marr the mighty work.  
Direct it, Chemos ! it is all thine own !"

Should the dumb ideot, whom with cruel scorn  
The gazing vulgar point at, all at once  
Wake from his trance, and, bursting through the cloud



Of mental darkness into reason's light,  
Speak with the wisdom of a man inspir'd,  
Object of greater wonder and surprise  
He could not be, than was the wretch possess'd,  
When, starting from his couch as he pronounc'd  
The name of Chemos, Dathan saw him stand  
With hands uplifted and slow-moving lips,  
As one, whose soul is wrapt in secret pray'r.  
Wild were his eyes, and horribly they roll'd  
Their vacillating and convulsive orbs.

“Father, cried Dathan, what I've seen and heard,  
Surpassing human reason to expound,  
Sends my astonish'd mind upon the search  
What more than mortal agent it must be,  
That, in your late exclusion from the world,  
Hath giv'n you understanding of things past,  
And things now passing. True, most true, it is,  
Rebellion is on foot ; the people turn  
From Canaan with abhorrence and despair ;  
The chosen of ten tribes have overthrown

The authority of Joshua ; Moses sinks"—

“ Enough ! the soul-enthrall’d demoniac cried ;  
So Moses sink, content I would embrace  
My consummation, were I now to fall,  
And die upon his ruins. I perceive  
It was a faithful spirit that I saw :  
He met me in the mountains ; I was lost,  
Cast off by earth and heav’n, the people’s scorn ;  
He took me up. When I had rais’d my hand  
Against myself, he staid it, and I liv’d.  
I gave him worship ; he gave me revenge.  
And now—what now ? There is a deed behind,  
Hangs on the rear of my unfinisht doom ;  
That done, I am entire. Ask not to know ;  
Press not enquiry on my lab’ring thoughts ;  
They stretch beyond myself. Speak not, but list !  
This night, this awful night, if thou art nerv’d  
With steady resolution to confront  
The fearful apparition, it may be  
Thou shalt behold the spirit, whom I serve.

True to the promise past, I will believe  
He shall not fail in that, which is to come.  
Go, find Abiram ; bring him to my tent.  
There yet is wanting that, which must fill up  
The dreadful interim.”—No more he said,  
Nor did the Reubenite attempt reply,  
But silently departed. Now, e’en now,  
Or ere the hell-devoted wretch prepar’d  
’To make oblation of the sacred names,  
Husband and father, heav’n’s immediate trust,  
Had not th’ inexorable fiend put out  
Nature’s last spark in his benighted breast,  
That last, that languid spark had yet again  
Burst into life and kindled at his heart ;  
For now before him stood his patient wife,  
With infant innocence in either hand,  
Obedient to his call. Th’ affrighted babes,  
Averse, but at their mother’s bidding, knelt  
And begg’d a blessing : none had he to give,  
Himself unblest—“ Woman, he sternly cried,

Why would you teach your childre n to affect  
This vain knee-worship, when too well thou know'st  
Impenetrable darkness shrowds that path,  
By which my pray'rs can never more ascend.  
Yet 'tis not therefore that my hope is lost :  
The sons of Korah need not kneel in vain,  
Nor is there cause that thou thyself should'st wear  
That face of sadness ; for there is a power,  
Avenger of my wrongs, who will protect  
Thee and thy children, so thou wilt consent  
To honour thy protector."—" True, she said,  
I know there is a pow'r, supremely good,  
Who, to the pure and innocent of heart,,  
Which sure these infants are, with fav'ring gráce  
Will grant a blessing at the father's suit."—

“ Stop there ! the terrified apostate cried,  
Nor speak that name, which, striking on my sense,  
Would fire my brain with phrensy, launch my rage  
'Gainst thee and them, and change the sightless air,  
Wherein the spirit, that now hears thee, rides,

To an embodied fiend, who would torment  
Thy soul for daring so t' insult his ear.  
Now mark me !—Chemos is the pow'r I serve.  
To him I have devoted thee and thine :  
For he it is, who from the magic rod,  
That sceptre of my tyrant, sets me free,  
Above the reach of Moses, and transfers  
Dominion, long usurp'd by him, to me,  
Leader and lord of Israel, whilst he sinks  
Into that gulph, upon whose troubled waves  
I have been tossing weary nights and days,  
Since from the land of Goshcn we came forth,  
Whither we now return. To Chemos, then,  
Whose glories, if obedient, thou shalt sec,  
Pay that devoted homage which is due,  
And share with me the honours he bestows."

" Can I do this, the trembling matron said,  
Can I do this and live ?"—Then, in her arms  
Clasping her children, sunk upon the floor.

This when the desperate blasphemer saw,

Something within his recreant bosom pass'd—  
It was not conscience—yet it made him pause.  
It was a foretaste of that chilling pang  
Which sends the life-blood curdling to the heart  
E'en of the sternest murd'rer, ere he deal  
Th' exterminating blow. Before him knelt  
Nature's best advocates, whose silent suit,  
Than speech more moving, press'd their last appeal,  
And shook the soul within him. As the bark,  
Or ere it founders in the surging waves,  
Gives through its shiv'ring frame the fatal shock  
That warns the seaman of his wat'ry death,  
So trembled the aw'd traitor, till the fiend,  
Rush'd on his heart, and prompted these dire words.

“Canst thou do this and live? Is that thy doubt?  
Taunting he cried; say rather, canst thou live,  
And let that be undone which I command?  
Thou canst not, woman. In my grasp behold  
This, which at once cuts hesitation short,  
And makes thee guilty of thy children's death.

Therefore resolve ! Or give thyself and them  
To Chemos, whom I serve, or see them die.  
Who but thyself hath drawn this dagger forth ?  
Thou giv'st the blow ; they perish by thy hand."

" Ah spare my children ! Spare my harmless babes !  
Take me, take them, the frantic mother cried,  
As with an agonizing shriek she rose,  
And give to Chemos all that nature gave !  
I am thy slave—they live, and I am lost !"  
She said—through all her deep foundations hell  
Felt the infernal joy. The deed was done ;  
The sentence irreversible was past :  
No more—let him, that reads, conceive the rest !

Now, 'to his inmost tent again retir'd,  
Soon as the victim of the fiends had stamp'd  
The seal of condemnation on his race,  
Thus in low murmurs his dark thoughts found way.

" When those contentious spirits, whom we deem'd  
Cast from their thrones in heav'n, now reassume  
Their airy stations, and from them direct

And rule the fortunes of this nether world,  
Whither can I, a wretched son of earth,  
But to the friends of wretchedness, resort?  
If universal nature claim the care  
Of Him, who is The Maker, why am I  
Struck out by Providence, to make a gap  
In that dependent chain, which only breaks  
That I may fall? And who of woman born,  
Conscious of merit, can endure neglect?  
Wherein was Moses worthier than myself?  
In birth no more; in mental vigour less,  
His thoughts were low: ambition courted him;  
In me it was my nature. Time hath been,  
I would have died to set my nation free;  
He meanly stoop'd to take the hireling's pay,  
And kept the flock of Jethro. How unjust,  
Partial and pitiless was the decree,  
That doom'd extinction to that brighter flame,  
Which in my warm aspiring bosom glow'd,  
And kindled his dead ashes into life!



Answer me, nature ! is not this a wrong  
Beyond my bearing ? Have I not just cause,  
To warrant my despair of an appeal  
To that tribunal, which awards the wrong ?  
I did not leave ; 'tis I am left of heav'n.  
Thwarted ambition, by a natural change,  
Turns to revenge. It settled at my heart :  
I struggled to submit and be at peace ;  
In vain—my struggles only fann'd the fire,  
And render'd that immortal, which I strove  
To stifle and extinguish. Then it was,  
In that dark hour of my extremest need,  
When madness seiz'd my desolated brain,  
Chemos !, thy timely visitation came :  
Then, from behind thine altar, as the cloud  
Its misty skirts unfolded, I beheld  
The servant of thy pow'r : in human shape  
He stood, and talk'd with me as man to man,  
And promis'd vengeance, ample as my wrongs.  
This, this was balm to my soul's rankling wound,

Untented, and yet bleeding with the stab  
Cruel contempt had dealt me : then it was,  
O Chemos ! then it was, I put aside  
My ancient faith, and at thine altar knelt.  
And lo ! again I kneel—again, in thee  
Confiding, to thy service I devote  
Myself, my all, and am thine own entire !”

More had he said, when, as he strove to vent  
His meditated pray’r, amaz’d he found  
His palsied tongue had lost the pow’r to speak ;  
Cold on his furrow’d brow the faint drops hung,  
Their slacken’d lids fell o’er his darken’d eyes,  
And death-like lethargy benumb’d his sense.  
Scarce had he strength to rise and seek his couch ;  
There stricken down, and at his length supine,  
Full of the fiend, th’ entranc’d apostate lay.  
Then on the pictur’d tablet of his mind  
The shadowy form of his deceiver gleam’d,  
Garb’d as before and bearded to the waist.  
Thus, for a while, as long as might suffice

For recognition, the pale spectre stood ;  
When soon, behold ! the hoar and wrinkled fiend,  
Quick as the shifting of a scene, became  
Tall and erect ; his visage now display'd  
Tarnish'd magnificence, that dimly show'd  
A faded remnant of his splendor past :  
Fall'n spirit though he was, there yet emerg'd  
A ray of majesty, not quite eclips'd ;  
And now, though age no longer could be trac'd  
In form or feature, still, if youth it were,  
'Twas youth in misery not immature ;  
A face, that spoke the loss of happier days ;  
A wint'ry spring, whose bloom had been washt out  
By many a show'r, and dash'd with chilling storm.  
Upon the slumb'ring wretch he fix'd his eyes,  
And would have smil'd ; but that, amidst the pangs  
Of a tormented conscience, mocks the power  
E'en of immortal essence to effect.  
'Twas ill-dissembled joy, that only serv'd  
To throw a deeper shade upon despair :

Yet with so strong a spell had he possess'd  
The senses of his victim, soul-entranc'd,  
That in his vision Korah saw and heard  
All that the demon gave to eye or ear :  
And now, preparing to display the host  
Of rebel angels, arm'd to overthrow  
The pow'r of Moses, vaunting thus he spake.

“ Now that thy hungry vengeance is appeas'd,  
Sleep'st thou, thrice happy mortal ? It is well !  
So sleeps the tiger, glutt'd with his feast,  
And, dreaming, slays his victim o'er again,  
Laps the warm blood, and tears the quiv'ring flesh.  
And now, to mark thee favour'd, thou shalt see—  
What never yet to waking man was shown—  
Chemos, the fiery god, who deals around  
To all his faithful nations golden gleams,  
Dispensing life and health ; but to his foes,  
And such are all, whom Moses calls his friends,  
Fever and atrophy and spotted plague.  
Nor I alone, but the whole winged host

Of thy protecting spirits shall appear ;  
And though their airy insubstantial forms  
No human speculation can pervade,  
Yet, for thou art confed'rate and approv'd,  
In thy ecstatic vision with clos'd eyes  
Thou shalt behold them. Lo ! what myriads come,  
Borne on the breezy north, from Moab's heights,  
From Amorrhæa's and from Basan's groves,  
From Idumæa to the lofty range  
Of Libanus, and westward from the coasts  
Of Sidon and of Tyre. Sec'st thou not him,  
Tremendous god, with human blood besmear'd ?  
'Tis Moloch, worshipt in Gehenna's vale :  
In his mail'd hand he brandishes a torch,  
And lo ! he hurls the blazing mischief down ;  
Sparkling it glances through the turbid air,  
Diffusing discord o'er the factious camp.  
Behold, with silv'ry crescent on her brow,  
In sable mantle studded o'er with stars,  
The virgin goddess ! Her, Sidonian dames

Incense with odour of Sabæan gums :  
Mild though she seem, yet mighty is her pow'r,  
Or when to Hades sunk, or when malign  
Of aspect, and with ominous eclipse,  
As at this night, she makes diviners mad,  
And plagues the nations, who provoke her wrath.  
Once more direct thine intellectual eye,  
Where He, of toiling husbandry the God,  
Dagon, throughout Philistia's realm ador'd,  
Like a huge cloud, obscure and big with storm,  
Hovers enormous, and through all your tribes,  
Tir'd of their dewy food, inspires distaste,  
Firing their eager fancies to return,  
Where plenty courts them on the banks of Nile.  
Thesè, and of others an innum'rous host,  
Who, though from heav'n excluded, reign on earth,  
Arm in thy cause : and think'st thou that the rod  
Of Moses, though the yielding waters felt  
Its magic stroke, can against these prevail  
To break one pinion of celestial growth,

And wound immortals, scathless as the air ?  
But lo ! where morning glimmers in the east ;  
Thy comrades Dathan and Abiram come  
To seek their leader : fear not, but assume  
The proud supremacy of Israel's priest,  
And sanctify the people for their march  
Back to the land of Goshen. This, thy god,  
I, Chemos, who now speak to thee, permit.  
Seize then thy censer ; seize it in my name !  
Heed not thy prophet's pray'r ; th' incumbent cloud  
Of hostile deities, that soar aloft,  
Shall beat it down with their triumphant wings,  
And give it to the winds. Awake ; arise !”

The demon vanish'd, and with him the dream :  
Korah awoke ; the factious chiefs approach'd.  
“ Up ! and salute the day-spring, Dathan cried ;  
It is the herald of that glorious sun,  
That now ascends to light thee to the goal,  
Which thou hast toil'd to reach. The tribes revolt,  
They spurn at Moses, and disdain his yoke :

The lion couches, that c'erwhile so proud,  
Flam'd on the crest of Joshua's tow'ring helm :  
Fierce as the wounded panther Caleb raves ;  
None dare approach him, dang'rous in his wrath :  
The men of Judah and of Ephraim stand  
Irresolute and resting on their spears,  
Whilst old Elishama is hardly stay'd  
From rushing on his sword. The people chuse  
Me and Abiram and the princely son  
Of Peleth, to be leaders of the host  
Upon their homeward march. Moses the whilst  
In very agony hath rent his robe ;  
So thou from him the government shalt rend  
Of Israel's tribes, and on his ruin build  
The firm foundation of thy rising pow'r.  
On thee, the son of Izah, now devolves  
Command imperial, sanction'd by the choice  
Of a free nation, who no longer stoop  
To laws and ordinances, fram'd to lead  
Their wills in fetters, forg'd by Pharaoh's slave,



The foundling of the Nile. But lo ! the crowd  
Is gathering to thy tent. Be ready thou  
To meet their homage, and prevent their wish."

" Am I not ready ; cried th' infuriate wretch,  
Am I not warn'd ? Is not my dream confirm'd ?  
Have I not seen the spirits, who possess  
That region of the air, to which the steam  
Of my full censer, (which behold I seize  
With fearless hand, so bidden !) shall ascend  
In clouds of od'rous incense, that at once  
Shall speak my gratitude, and waft delight  
E'en to ethereal senses ? Get ye hence !  
Be ready, with his censer, every man,  
Who loves my person, or approves my cause,  
To consecrate the triumph of this day."

He said ; they parted : when, clate with pride,  
And for perdition ripe, he thus exclaim'd—  
" Hail to thee, Chemos ! though at thy command  
I take this censer, doom'd to other use,  
I take it to thy glory, to thy praise ;

Thou art my god, and 'tis to honour thee  
That I prepare this incense." At the word  
A female scream'd: he look'd; it was his wife!  
Swooning she lay: a chilling pang the whilst  
Ran to his heart; raging he stamp'd the floor;  
When a deep groan, as if th' indignant earth  
Had felt the insult, broke upon his ear.  
Aghast he started. Instantly was heard  
One, that cried out, "Come forth!" 'Twas Dathan's voice.  
Frantic he seiz'd his censer; cast a look  
Upon the wretched partner of his doom,  
A last, a dying look, and forth he rush'd.

Trembling, convuls'd, with wild disorder'd step,  
And robe loose-flowing in unseemly guise,  
As tow'rds the congregation he advanc'd,  
And 'gan to rear his censer, full in front  
The reverend form of Moses met his eye.  
Sudden he stopp'd, heart-stricken to behold  
Him of his proper self-command possest,  
Calm and serene, whom his high-swelling hope

Had pictur'd pow'rless, prostrate, and forlorn.  
With terror great as fancy can devise  
For the appall'd assassin, should he meet  
The victim, he had left a mangled corpse,  
Whole and alive, with all his gashes heal'd,  
And arm'd for vengeance, e'en with such dismay  
The trembling caitiff stood. Not all his fiends,  
Had the whole dynasty of hell been there,  
Could have prevail'd with him t' advance a step  
Nearer the awful virtue. All were husht ;  
The breath of God's displeasure was abroad ;  
All nature felt the dreadful coming-on ;  
The awe-struck demons hover'd on the wing,  
Waiting till Moses, who had fix'd his eyes  
On Korah, thus the sacred silence brake.

“ Korah ! the heinous nature of thy sin  
Is known to Him, whose all-pervading eye  
Looks through the purpose of thy treacherous heart.  
Whether it be the will of Israel's God,  
That Aaron, or that thou should'st be his priest,

This dread impending moment must decide.  
The cause will not be carelessly adjudg'd,  
That brings to trial the world's mighty Lord  
With his presumptuous creature. When thou bear'st  
That priestly symbol, say—and search thy heart—  
Look well that thou art perfect and sincere—  
Is it to do God service? Wilt thou vouch,  
And stake thy soul's salvation on the truth,  
That in thy nightly wand'rings thou hast met  
No demon in thy path? never convers'd  
With hell-form'd apparitions? never bent  
Thy knee to Chemos?—Do I know thee now?  
Ah, lost, convicted, miserable man!  
How far, and whither art thou gone from Him,  
Who was thy fathers' worship? Not on me,  
But on thyself this judgment thou hast drawn,  
This ruin, this perdition. Hear me now,  
Ye men of Israel! Stubborn as ye are,  
Deep as the guilt of your rebellion is,  
Yet shall ye be my witnesses this day:

If Korah die the common death of man,  
If Dathan and Abiram and the son  
Of Peleth come by nature to their end,  
Then have I rashly spoken for the Lord  
The thing that is not, and the guilt is mine :  
But if the pow'r of an almighty hand  
Put nature from her course, and a new thing,  
A fearful and portentous, come to pass ;  
If the earth open from beneath their feet,  
And they go down alive into the pit,  
Terrible consummation ! if the air,  
Clear and untroubled, as ye now behold,  
Shall on a sudden kindle, and come down  
In fire upon the sacrilegious heads  
Of these deluded followers, who appear  
Arm'd with their censers to abet the cause  
Of Korah and his faction—then am I  
Clear of offence ; the vengeance of the Lord  
Acquits me in your sight. Hear yet again,  
Ye, whom in pity I would still preserve ;

Fly from their impious tents, if life be dear,  
And stand at distance : for within the smoke  
Of their unhallow'd incense all is death ;  
If it but touch your raiments, ye are lost.  
Now, even now I feel the quaking earth  
Give warning of the awful coming-on :  
I see where, charg'd with death, the sulph'rous blast,  
Prepar'd to volley its embowel'd flames,  
Rides in the troubled air!" No more ! For now  
The scatter'd congregation fled aghast :  
Loud roar'd the thunder ; dreadful was the burst :  
Earth to the centre yawn'd, and inly groan'd,  
As if her death's-wound she had then receiv'd,  
And that tremendous pit had been the grave  
Of universal nature. Down at once,  
Down sunk apostate Korah ; Dathan there,  
There sunk Abiram ; whilst the fires, that earth  
Threw up, were mingled with the fires from heav'n.

But hark ! 'The Muse's warning voice cries out—  
“ Enough ! The judgments of the Lord are true

And righteous altogether. Scan them not.  
Let man be silent!" We obey, and cease.

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

## BOOK THE SEVENTH.

### ARGUMENT.

*MOSES pronounces sentence upon the rebellious people—The evil spirits are dispersed—The period of the Israelites' abode in the wilderness being passed, Moses gives order for their march towards Canaan—The gods of the idolatrous nations assemble on the mountains of Abarim, where Chemos resorts to them—Balak, King of Moab, holds a council with the confederate kings—Balaam arrives at his camp, and delivers his prophecy, and blesses Israel, whom he was called upon to curse—His predictions are disregarded, and a battle becomes inevitable.*





# THE EXODIAD.

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## BOOK THE SEVENTH.

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THE fires no longer fell, and the deep pit  
Clos'd o'er its sinking wreck ; the pride of man  
Was punish'd, and th' avenging angel paus'd.  
The chiefs and princes, famous in their tribes,  
Who leagu'd with Korah in his dire revolt,  
Were now no more ; and, as the smoke dispers'd,  
The ground, on which they stood before their tents  
Waving their guilty censers, might be seen  
White with their ashes—heart-appalling sight !  
Before the congregation Moses stood ;

Sad was his countenance, and, as he turn'd  
A look upon the people, that presag'd  
The mournful tidings they were now to hear—  
“ Mark me ! he cried, for this is the decree,  
Which Israel's God commands me to announce  
To your back-sliding, unbelieving race.  
What ye refus'd to do by God's command,  
That by your own choice never shall be done :  
The land, which God had promis'd, the good land,  
Which faithful Joshua and which Caleb saw,  
And would have led you thither, was your own ;  
The Lord was with you ; victory was there  
With out-spread wings to welcome your approach ;  
And that triumphant destiny, which waits  
For those, whose glories ye shall never share,  
Had with your march auspiciously commenc'd.  
Ye would not march ; ye would not heed the voice  
Of them that counsell'd wisely ; ye would hear  
Those dastard spies, your own unworthy choice,  
To whose congenial treachery ye gave

Full credence, and believ'd their base report :  
For which impending vengeance is gone forth ;  
A mortal pestilence is in their veins,  
And they shall die the death that is prepar'd  
For thousands leagu'd with them, whilst Joshua lives,  
And Caleb lives ; for they shall see the land,  
Subdue it, and possess it, and be blest.  
These, who had conquer'd Amalek, and taught  
Your tribes the road to victory, ye spurn'd,  
And chose convenient leaders of your own,  
Whom the earth would not bear : nay, to complete  
The sum of your iniquity, ye strove  
To seize the priesthood also, and elect  
A worshipper of Chemos in the stead  
Of Aaron, contumacious as ye are !  
Do you now stand amaz'd, and beat your breasts,  
And vent your loud lamentings, when you see  
These terrors, when your God sends plague, that adds  
Corruption to corruption, and decrees  
Judgment on those, whom mercy could not move ?

Ye had been all extinguish'd, and from me  
A mightier nation than yourselves had fill'd  
The void of your exclusion, had not God  
In his long-suff'ring goodness heard my pray'r,  
And sav'd you at my suit ; that so your sons  
Might see that land, which is denied to you.  
Where were your senses, when you lent your faith  
To Gaddiel and to Shammua, and forgot  
Joshua and Caleb, chosen of the Lord,  
Who stand beside me, and whose gen'rous hearts  
Now feel the dint of pity for your fate ?  
They with your sons to Canaan shall go forth,  
And fill the measure of their glory up :  
Ye, the mean while, till time shall pass away,  
Here must abide ; for know, unhappy men,  
This wilderness is doom'd to be your grave."

He ceas'd ; the people sigh'd, and hung the head,  
And mournfully departed to their tents.

To Abarim, whose lofty summits rang'd  
Beyond th' Asphaltic sea, th' infernal host

Fled on the wing, discomfited, abash'd :  
Chemos alone, on heavy pinions pois'd,  
Still hover'd o'er the spot where Korah sank,  
And from the contemplation of his doom  
Drew the sad presage of his own despair.  
Whirl'd round and round in the sulphureous blast  
With ruffled plumes, the fires had smote him sore :  
The glimm'ring meteor, that erewhile had play'd  
Its counterfeited glory round his head,  
Now, like a fallen star, had disappear'd,  
And black as night in the distemper'd air  
Darkling he rode. Thence as he bent a look  
Upon the congregated host, and heard .  
. The doom of Canaan, the prophetic words  
Pierc'd his proud spirit : little care had he  
For Korah and his crew ; much for his groves,  
His idols, and the honour of his shrines,  
Incens'd by mighty nations far and wide,  
That paid him worship, and confess'd his name.  
Meantime the tort'ring self-inflicted stabs

Of hell-born malice rack'd him with such pangs,  
As none but deathless beings can abide,  
And only fiends infernal can deserve ;  
When thus aloud lamenting he exclaim'd—

“ Hither, ye fearful ministers of Him  
Whom hell's stern legions fruitlessly oppose,  
Hither in all your attributes of fire,  
Earthquake and storm and pestilence repair,  
And, like those suff'ring wretches, o'er whose heads  
The solid earth, so late disparted, clos'd,  
To the deep centre<sup>e</sup> hurl me ! From your clouds,  
With angry vapours charg'd, let thunders break,  
And vollied lightnings blast me ! Blow, ye winds,  
And through the dark and trackless void of space,  
Oh plant me on creation's utmost verge,  
Where haply shelter'd from the scarching ken  
Of that Omnipotence, which mocks my toil,  
Chaos may shrowd my shame ! It will not be !  
The pow'r, 'gainst whom we league, will not relent ;  
He, that made all things, hath not made a place,

Where his discarded angels may repose :  
Nor will my torments pause ; too deeply lodg'd,  
The fest'ring poison must devour my heart ;  
The recollection of departed bliss,  
The strong conviction of unceasing pangs,  
For ever are my portion. His decree  
Immutable has pass'd : in him no change,  
In us there is no hope but to pursue  
With wrath eternal his selected race ;  
And though no Korah live to aid our cause,  
And spread rebellion through his favour'd tribes,  
Yet when our altars blaze through every tract  
Of the wide world, whilst here his Levites hymn  
Faint hallelujahs in the desert air,  
Good hope, though our angelic thrones be lost,  
Still we may wage more equal battle here ;  
And from the myriads of dependent orbs,  
That circle through the infinite of space  
Round his resplendent throne, may rescue one,  
And be the lords of earth, as He of heav'n !"



He ceas'd, and fled desponding to the heights  
Of Abarim, there to join his sad compeers.

Now when by Him, with whom a thousand years  
Are but as yesterday, the date of time  
Was perfected, and death's atoning power,  
Like the refiner's fire, had purg'd the hearts  
Of God's selected people from the taint  
Of Korah's sin, which through the tribes had spread  
Loathsome corruption and profane revolt,  
To Moses the almighty mandate came,  
That with the morrow's dawn he should convene  
The congregated people, and announce  
Their march for Canaan. This when he perceiv'd,  
And by sure tokens knew and inly felt  
The awful intimation was from God,  
Straight, from his couch uprising, he exclaim'd—

“Thy will be done, O Lord! and sure I was,  
The promise thou hadst made to Abram's race,  
Though stay'd and for a season turn'd aside  
By Korah's sin, forgotten could not be

By Thee, who art the righteousness and truth,  
Holy and just for ever. Now, O Lord,  
In mercy visit the repentant hearts  
Of these thy chasten'd people. Not on them  
Lay thou the burden of their fathers' sin,  
But spare this once the children at the suit  
Of me thy servant, who have train'd them up  
In thy true faith and worship : spare them, Lord,  
And lead them to thy promise, for my sake,  
Who, when thy bounty would have made me great,  
Not for myself, thou know'st, but in my love  
To Israel, ask'd th' inheritance for them.  
And now there is no portion in that land  
For me, thy frail but faithful creature, me,  
Now in my old age going forth to war,  
When my strength fails, and nature sighs for rest,  
Which never shall I find but in the grave.  
Still, for I know that from the mountain-top,  
Beyond that stream, which I must never pass,  
My dim eyes shall behold, or ere they close,

That blessed region, where thy name shall dwell,  
Therefore I give thee praise, and with a heart  
Devoutly thankful shall resign my breath,  
To seek thy mercy in a happier world."

Thus in the stilness of his nightly tent  
The pious prophet commun'd with his heart,  
And by the light of the pale moon went forth  
To seek the army's leader. Him he found,  
Not wrapt in lazy sleep, but on a scroll,  
Outspread before him, studiously intent.

"Joshua, what readest thou?" the prophet said.  
The warrior, rising as he spake, replied,  
"Trusting that now the time is near at hand,  
When thou by God's command will call us forth,  
I was reviewing with a careful mind  
What Caleb and myself had noted down,  
As matter for our guidance in th' attempt  
Upon that land, which then we deem'd so near—  
Alas! how rashly. Yet the time may come"—  
"Behold, the time is come! replied the seer:

The word is on my lips, that bids thee rise,  
And marshal Israel's army for their march.  
Soon as to-morrow's light shall tinge the east,  
Gird on thy warrior-sword, and seize thy spear,  
And, mail'd for battle, bid the heralds give  
The loud-tongu'd clarions breath, and call to arms."

" Praise be to Israel's God ! the chief exclaim'd,  
And thou, his servant, blessed may'st thou be,  
And honour'd in the congregation's sight,  
When at the sounding of the martial trump  
The thousands and ten thousands of the Lord,  
The giver of all victory, shall be seen  
Fronting the east, and glitt'ring bright in arms.  
All shall be joy and gladness : ev'ry chief  
Before his harness'd warriors shall stand forth  
With heart high beating, mail'd from heel to helm :  
Order shall reign throughout ; never again  
Shall thy meeek spirit be aggriev'd to see  
The chilling look of sullen discontent,  
And hear the murmur circling in its course

Through factious legions, tainted with the sin  
Of disobedience to thy God and thee.

And now no more—thy part is to command,  
And that is done ; all that remains is mine.”

He said : the prophet to his tent retir'd ;  
The chief to meditation and those cares,  
Which know no pause, and interdict repose.

With the first break of day, behold ! the word  
Of Joshua was fulfill'd ; arrang'd for march  
Stood the whole host of Israel : to their front  
Moses advanc'd, and thus address'd the chiefs.

“ Sons of the promise, it is now the time,  
When in the spirit of the Lord your God  
I warn you from this desert to come forth,  
And through opposing nations force your way,  
Till it shall be your destiny to plant  
His tabernacle in its holy place.

Ye must not hope that heav'n will lead you on  
Through rosy paths to vict'ry ; ye must win  
Or ere ye wear your laurels, for behold

With nations mightier than yourselves ye war.  
The suffering earth is overspread with sin :  
An all-directing Providence permits  
For reasons, that your nature cannot reach,  
The ministers of darkness to erect  
Their impious altars and usurp the world,  
Till from this wilderness ye shall go forth,  
As at this hour, by faithful Joshua led :  
Then, as the one eternal God expell'd  
These rebel angels from their thrones in heav'n,  
So will He from their idol shrines on earth.  
Now be ye strong in courage as in faith :  
If with pure hearts affianc'd to your God  
Ye go to battle, let the trumpet sound !"

He said, and instantly the pealing blast  
Burst on the ear, and the whole living mass  
Of shouting myriads fronted to the east.  
Onward they held their march, upon the left  
Skirting the lofty Idumæan hills,  
O'er which the twelve had pass'd, nor did they halt

Their progress till to Moab's land they came :  
Thence northward shaping their digressive course  
Beyond th' Asphaltic sea, they reach'd the plains  
West of Mount Pisgah, that sublimely tow'rs  
O'er the long chain of Abarim's proud heights,  
Haunt of the hostile gods. Assembled there  
In deep consult th' infernal synod sate ;  
When Chemos, by the holy record styl'd  
Of Moab the abomination, rose,  
And thus half vaunting, half desponding, spake !

“ Lords of the nether world, when ye behold  
These vultures of the desert, Jacob's brood,  
Hov'ring upon the confines of our land,  
Ye cannot need my warning to perceive  
What danger menaces your neighb'ring thrones.  
Since Korah sank and Amalek was slain,  
Both unreveng'd, both martyr'd in our cause,  
My sorrow only to myself is known ;  
My toils, my cares are manifest to all.  
To Amorrhæa's and to Basan's groves,

To th' olive-crowned mount, and northward thence  
To Libanus, and o'er th' Assyrian realm  
Clear to the borders of the western sea,  
Where Dagon, Ashtaroth and Moloch reign,  
I've beat my airy round, and now behold,  
Immortal dignities ! with weary wing,  
And strength well nigh exhausted in your cause,  
I stand before you and demand your aid.  
Great need there is to summon all your powers :  
If less than all, despair must be our doom ;  
The Maker of the world reclaims his work,  
And earth is lost to us. Too well ye know  
There is a name in heav'n of matchless force ;  
Once ye have felt it ; and whilst these survive,  
In them it lives : rashly we deem'd them sunk  
In their Egyptian bondage, and assum'd  
Unrival'd property in all mankind :  
With a high hand their leader brought them forth ;  
Not all our gods could stay them ; Pharaoh sank :  
Earth shut her stores against them ; the dry waste



Denied them water ; Moses smote the rocks ;  
'The very dews of heav'n were turn'd to bread,  
And daily miracles supplied their wants—  
Are not these enemies, whom we should dread ?  
When they had vanquish'd Amalek, ye thought  
'That Canaan was their own : 'twas then that I,  
'Twas in that fearful moment I stood forth,  
And turn'd the heart of Korah ; I provok'd  
Rebellion in their tribes : the magic rod  
Shook in the hand of Moses ; God was wroth,  
And thousands fell by pestilence and fire.  
Thus we enjoy'd a truce : but now, behold !  
The fathers die, and a new race succeeds,  
A generation, that hath never known  
Egyptian bondage, in the desert born,  
Fierce as its whirlwinds, countless as its sands.  
Arise, look forth, survey them in their strength,  
Observe their order, note their men at arms ;  
Joshua commands ; their great Diviner lives ;  
He, whom the elements obey and serve,

Lives, and the wizard staff, which we beheld  
Turn'd to a serpent, is what it appear'd,  
And ev'ry fibre, every fold hath life.  
Rouse then, immortals, and defend your thrones,  
Or be for ever lost !" He said ; they heard,  
Nor answer gave, but from their rocky seat  
On the hill's summit rising, like a flock  
Of corm'rants by their centinel alarm'd,  
Sprung on the wing : loud thunders rent the air ;  
The mountain quak'd, and the charm'd whirlwind bore  
Each to his sep'rate region, where enshrin'd  
In pomp barbaric his proud idol stood.

'Then from each shrine oracular were heard  
Loud voices of enthusiastic priests,  
Proclaiming victory. On Moab's hills,  
In Amorrhæa's vales the trump of war  
Summon'd the combatants. Now Basan's king,  
The terror of the nations, deem'd of them  
Invincible, drew forth his giant host,  
A monstrous people, remnant of the race

Raphaim call'd, who in remoter time  
Usurp'd dominion o'er the wide domain,  
'That now beneath his iron sceptre groan'd.

While thus from Idumæa to the mount  
Of Libanus the far-assembled hordes  
Of fierce idolaters their force conven'd,  
The sons of Israel, camping on the plain  
Eastward of Jordan, by the rocky base  
Of Abarim's high range their station held.  
And now 'twas night, when Caleb from the heights  
Descending, whither he had gone to spy  
The posture of the foe, approach'd the tent  
Of Joshua : him beside his midnight lamp  
With the 'mcek prophet, from whose ceaseless cares  
Age knew no pause, in close consult he found,  
And thus the venerable pair address'd.

“ If I intrude upon those sacred thoughts,  
Which ye devote to Israel and to God,  
Father and friend, forgive me ; for I bring  
Intelligence, that with the earliest speed

Must be imparted to the army's chief.  
Our foe prepares for battle. On the heights,  
Impending o'er our camp, Balak displays  
His gorgeous standard, a resplendent sun :  
I saw him range his army in review,  
The strength of Moab, multitude immense  
Of light-arm'd bowmen, fitter, it should seem,  
To chace the antelope from crag to crag,  
Than with compact and steady front to meet  
The shock of columns rushing to the charge.  
Upon the north of these was form'd the host  
Of Sihon, lord of Amorrhæa's realm :  
In habergeons and coats of mail encas'd,  
Their well-appointed firm battalions stood ;  
Whilst others, mounted on their fiery steeds,  
Or in their scythed chariots scour'd the plain.  
The giant king of Basan there I saw  
Thron'd in his iron car ; upon the plain  
Of his enormous shield, with gold emboss'd,  
A scaly dragon curl'd its monstrous shape :

Through ev'ry rank of his extended line  
His thund'ring voice was heard : he, on the south  
Had rang'd his phalanx, no ignoble foe."

He ceas'd, when thus the aged prophet spake.  
" Since these misguided people, not content  
To let us pass in peace, resolve on war,  
War they shall have. It is not sought of us,  
But of themselves, and when they are impell'd  
By choice or by necessity to quit  
'Those barren heights, they'll find us on the plain ;  
A fatal meeting it will be for them.  
Of Basan's savage king no fear have I :  
Stature and strength were never giv'n to man,  
That he might be a champion to defy  
And mock the armics of the living God :  
The bowman's arrow, or the slinger's stone  
Shall lay his giant carcase in the dust.  
And now, my sons, although I know how near  
My mortal journey gathers to its end,  
Yet am I sure, a little longer still,

Whilst Jordan's stream 'twixt me and Canaan rolls,  
I shall be with you, and behold the dawn  
Of Israel's triumph · not upon this plain,  
Where blind idolatry shall drench the land  
With blood of thousands, hath the Lord ordain'd  
A grave for Moses : on the mountain's top  
Mine eyes, or ere they close, shall catch one gleam  
Of that bright sun, O Joshua, which shall rise  
To gild with glory thy victorious helm.  
Nor shall thy loyalty and steady faith,  
Son of Jephunneh, unrewarded pass :  
For thee an ample portion is reserv'd,  
Bright hours of honour, and long years of rest.  
And now farewell ! 'Too precious is the time  
'Twixt this and morning to be so employ'd  
By you in list'ning to an old man's talk."

“ A moment's pause, the army's chief replied ;  
To hear thee never can be waste of time,  
But ever its best use. Though in our hearts  
We are prepar'd to meet what Heav'n decrees,

One thing is wanting, which thy grace may add ;  
It is, that, when thy Levites shall be call'd  
To hymn their morning pray'r, thou would'st permit  
Thy servant to call forth the men at arms,  
That we may join our oraisons, and all  
By thee, the blessed of the Lord, be bless'd."

He said, when, to his pious suit the scer  
Assenting, press'd the warriors in his arms,  
And smiling, as he held them to his heart,  
With grace ineffable, retir'd to rest.

The first faint blush of morn had scarcely ting'd  
Pisgah's high-tow'ring brow, when from his couch,  
Where sleepless he had pass'd the weary night,  
Moab's vext monarch sprung, and from his tent,  
Clear to the promontory's utmost verge  
With hurried step advancing, forth he came ;  
There stopp'd, and on the out-stretcht plain beneath  
Saw the whole line of Israel's marshall'd host,  
As 'twixt the stream of Jordan and the heights  
Of Abarim in solemn march it pass'd.

Aghast the wonder-stricken pagan stood,  
When, as the trumpet signal gave to form,  
The host presented to each point of Heav'n  
A level front, within whose ample square  
God's holy tabernacle central stood.

Again the trumpet sounded, when behold !  
The Levites with their steaming censers came,  
And clouds of frankincense obscur'd the air.  
This done, when all was clear, Moses went forth,  
And to the tabernacle's front advanc'd.  
No need was now for further signal, all,  
Israel's whole army, prostrate on the ground,  
Their silent oraisons to Heav'n pour'd forth,  
Whilst Moses, with his eyes uprais'd, and hands  
In meek devotion clasp'd, on their behalf  
To Him, who through the wilderness had led  
His chosen people, supplication made.

Balak the whilst, in solemn horror wrapt,  
Gaz'd on the passing scene ; but when the host,  
Rising at once, join'd in the sacred hymn,



And when at ev'ry pause the general clash  
Of spears and faulchions, on their sounding shields  
By myriads of applauding warriors struck,  
In chorus dread re-echo'd from the hills,  
Starting, he back recoil'd and stood appall'd.  
So, when in Afric's deep entangled woods  
A lonely traveller bewilder'd roves,  
What time the darkling eve his path obscures,  
If then perchance the lion's dreadful roar  
From an adjoining thicket strike his ear,  
His throbbing heart with apprehension shrinks,  
And death's pale form seems hov'ring o'er his head.  
Back to his tent th' affrighted monarch hied,  
Where Baſan's king and Sihon with their chiefs,  
Already met, in royal council sate,  
And them in words abrupt he thus address'd—  
“ Kings, princes, warriors ! either give your faith  
To what I shall relate of Israel's host,  
Or instantly repair to yonder cliff,  
And try if computation can attain

A portion of their number. Ah ! 'twere vain :  
As well ye might sum up the countless sand  
On the broad margin of th' Asphaltic sea.  
If all our gods do not as one combine,  
They, who confess but one, by Him upheld,  
Will overturn their altars, strip their groves,  
Nor leave a remnant of their shrines on earth.  
For me, if here my term of life must end,  
I perish for my country, for my faith,  
My friends, my subjects. Israel is array'd  
For battle : I beheld her prophet kneel  
In the mid host ; they chorus'd to his pray'r,  
Till the rock trembled underneath my feet.  
They are enthusiastic, wild and screw'd  
By incantations to the very pitch  
That overpeers discretion, and would scale  
These rocks, on which the eagle hardly dares  
To hang her airey : higher than these hills  
To 'scape their charge we never can ascend ;  
Descending hence, we conquer or we fall."

Here Balak ceas'd, when Amorrhæa's king,  
Sihon, arose ; a loose, voluptuous man,  
And not less vain of person than of pow'r :  
In habergeon all studded o'er with gems,  
And crescent clasping his tiara's front,  
The glitt'ring pageant stood, and thus he spake.

“ What Jacob was, we know, and as the sire  
Such through their generations are the sons,  
A false, insidious, sycophantish race ;  
Slaves out of work, who wander through the world,  
And settle only where no nation owns  
The thankless soil, and none but they can live.  
If ye will grant them passage through your land,  
They'll bless you for your bounty and be gone.  
Or what if Balak from his wide domain  
Shall set apart some waste unpeopled tract,  
Where with the vultures and the beasts of prey  
They may contest their title to the dew  
On which the serpent feeds, and call it bread ;  
Such bread hath been their only fare of late :

Or, as their task-masters in Egypt did,  
Send them to labour in the muddy ooze,  
And dig up Sodom from th' Asphaltic lake :  
There let them dwell, if they can find it there,  
And occupy the birthright, which they stole."

Thus spake he taunting, when the giant-king  
Rear'd his vast bulk, and briefly thus replied—  
" Wherefore this waste of words on point so clear ?  
Mine shall be few. The choice is with the foe.  
If they come here to fight, we cannot fly ;  
If 'tis in peace they come, my sentence is,  
Curse them by all your gods, and let them pass."

" Fully, O king, said Balak, though in few,  
And wisely hast thou counsell'd. To our gods  
We must appeal for curses, to o'ercome  
The potent incantations of our foe.  
'Twas not the sword of Joshua, that subdu'd  
Imperial Amalek ; it was the rod  
Of their magician, waving on the rock,  
That turn'd the fortune of that fatal day :

Else never more had Israel's name been heard.  
What follows ? Spells to spells must be oppos'd,  
Magician to magician. Mark me now !  
At Pethor, on Euphrates' far-fam'd stream  
There lives a sage, through all the east renown'd,  
Balaam his name : amongst Chaldæa's priests,  
In contemplation of the heav'nly signs,  
And nightly speculations on the tops  
Of consecrated hills, his youth he pass'd :  
There, as 'tis said, by his mysterious art  
He learnt to commune with the embrio fates,  
And trace the secrets of the time to come :  
From his research nor earth, nor heav'n, nor hell  
Withhold their destinies ; his spell can reach  
In their celestial houses the charm'd stars,  
Eclipse the sun and turn the moon to blood.  
If Moses hath an equal, he it is,  
And time alone can show to which belong  
The palm of science and the rod of pow'r.  
I sent him courteous greeting, and besought,

In terms that kings are little wont to use,  
His presence at my camp. He, who compels  
The spirits of the air to stoop the wing,  
Stoop'd not to me, but with the lofty state  
That learning oft assumes, or in the hope  
That specious hesitation might enhance  
The terms of his compliance, answer gave  
Obscure and doubtful. Vext, and with good cause,  
So to be made the sport of his caprice,  
I sent a second deputation forth,  
Men more select, 'who will not be denied."

He ceas'd, for now a distant shout was heard,  
Faint at the first, but swelling as it roll'd,  
Till, by successive myriads caught, the name  
Of Pethor's Seer re-echo'd through the camp.  
The kings arose, and, circled by their chiefs,  
Forth issu'd from the tent. At their approach  
The word was giv'n for order ; all were still,  
The multitude retir'd, and full in view,  
With solemn pace and mien erect, as one

Conscious of due pre-eminence, the sage  
Unaw'd approach'd : loose was his azure robe,  
And in the passing breeze his white locks wav'd.  
All eyes were bent on his impressive form,  
And expectation held th' assembly mute ;  
When Balak thus—" All hail, renowned seer !  
High must have been our hope and strong our trust  
In thy sublime and supernatural art,  
When by the noblest of my realm I sent  
To woo thee to this meeting ; and behold  
Where Amorrhæa's and where Basan's kings  
Stand at my side, expectant to approve  
Thy pow'r miraculous, and hear thee launch  
Th' exterminating curse, that shall confound  
And sweep yon hostile army from the earth.  
They are the sons of Jacob, and they come  
With Moses their diviner to usurp  
By sorc'ries and by spells our ancient realm.  
Where were ye, gods of Egypt ? Where wert thou,  
O father Nile ! to let this babe accurst

Float in his rushy cradle on thy stream,  
And sec the Memphian harlot save his life  
To whelm her land in darkness and in death ?  
Wilt thou permit him so to deal with us,  
O sage Chaldæan ? That be far from thee !  
Yet I'll not counsel thee to scorn his pow'r :  
That were to slight our danger, and degrade  
Thy glory, when by thy tremendous curse  
These everlasting rocks shall be thrown down,  
And whelm him sinking to the shades below."

So Balak spake presumptuous ; the sage  
With ill-according look, that token'd doubt,  
Wav'd gently his hoar head, and thus replied.  
" Think not, O king, 'twas in my heart to slight  
Thy gracious embassy : that could not be ;  
For thee I honour, and thy gods are mine :  
The son of Zippor may command my art ;  
And well I know how grateful it would be  
To stem the progress of a foe, whose march,  
If checkt not, like the dread tornado's blast,



Will make a desert waste of this fair land,  
Tear down your sacred groves, and to the dust  
Level the altars of your guardian gods.  
Wisely you caution me how I misprize  
His strength, with whom you wish me to contend :  
I have too long been wonted to converse  
With disembodied spirits, and from dreams  
And visions to collect the will of fate,  
Not to perceive how great must be the pow'r  
Of him, whose mighty genius seems to hold  
Mysterious intercourse with Nature's God.  
Forms of ethereal brightness wait on him,  
Spirits of fire, unlike the darkling imps,  
Whom by my conjurations I must call  
From out the clefts and caverns of the rocks,  
Where, till my charm compels them to come forth,  
Slumb'ring they lie ; whilst Moses can dispatch  
His airy messengers upon the wing  
Through the clear empyrean to the banks  
Of far Euphrates, where my dwelling is .

I saw them in my dream : I heard a voice—  
‘ Curse not the people of the Lord ! it cried ;  
Balaam, beware !’—I started from my couch ;  
I listen’d ; all was still : I look’d around,  
And solitary darkness held her reign :  
Again oblivious sleep crept o’er my sense,  
When suddenly the same ethereal forms  
Pass’d, and, in tones yet more distinct, again  
Utter’d the awful interdict—‘ Beware !  
Curse not the chosen people of the Lord !’—  
What could I do ? The voice was not of man,  
And what am I ? If He, who is the God  
Of Moses and of Israel, will forbid  
The curse, which you invoke, to pass my lips,  
Though Balak offer’d me to share his realm,  
I dare not, could not disobey his will :  
What He inspires and dictates I must speak.”—

“ Speak then ! and torture us no more with dreams,  
Th’ impatient monarch cried. Give us to hear  
Your waking oracles : but first advance,

And from the summit of the rock behold  
The host of Israel on the plain below.  
There will be ample field for all your pow'rs ;  
No voices there can interdict your curse,  
No dreams can haunt you there." To him the sage-  
    " Princes, I know not how ye may decide  
Upon my constancy, but this I know  
What I have seen and witness'd was no dream.  
As I pursu'd my journey, ere the sun .  
Had clos'd his daily round, athwart my path  
An armed spirit stood : the conscious beast,  
Which bore me hither, and for years hath borne,  
Saw the bright shape, to me yet unreveal'd,  
And prostrate fell to earth : with sudden rage  
I smote her with my staff, and, had my hand  
Wielded a sword, I should have struck her dead.  
Judge now what terror seiz'd me, what amaze,  
When I look'd up, and lo ! all dazzling bright  
In armour, such as fancy might conceive  
The spirits militant in heav'n to wear,

A form angelic stood ; in his right hand  
He wav'd a flaming sword. In the clear light  
I saw him : 'twas no dream. I bow'd my head :  
Awake to ev'ry sense I heard him speak  
In my own tongue—' Balaam, he cried, beware !  
Thou shalt not curse God's people, whose I am :  
Not what thou would'st, but what the spirit of truth  
Will put into thy heart, that thou shalt speak'—  
And now, illustrious lords, if ye would hear  
What through my organs the prophetic pow'r  
Of good or ill to you and to your cause  
May have in purpose to reveal, prepare !  
Erect forthwith sev'n altars to the Signs :  
Let not the mason's tool prophane the stones,  
Of which ye build them up ; rude as they came  
From simple Nature's hand, such let them be :  
Pile on them heaps of wood, and lay thereon  
Your bleeding victims ; frankincense and myrrh,  
Spikenard and od'rous balsams intermixt  
Shall feed and cherish the propitious flame :

This done, what Heav'n inspires I will announce."

He said, and instantly the work began.

Sev'n massy altars on the mount were rear'd  
To the Sev'n Constellations, which in times,  
When yet tradition of the great events  
That had convuls'd the world was unimpair'd,  
Chaldæa's sage astronomers had nam'd  
The *Ship*, the *Raven*, emblems of the flood,  
The *Sacrificer*, *Altar*, *Victim*, *Cup*,  
Memorials of the solemn service paid  
By Noah, when through God's especial grace  
He, like a second Adam, was reserv'd  
To renovate the solitary world ;  
The *Hunter*, last, of mighty Nimrod type.  
But after-times perverted a design,  
Form'd to eternize these recorded truths,  
And from the one eternal God transferr'd  
Pray'r, adoration, sacrifice and praise  
To idols, fashion'd by the workman's tool :  
Oh, depravation monstrous and profane !

Now flam'd the altars : mute the nations stood,  
All gazing on the scer. He in mid space  
Of the wide circle for a while remain'd  
Listless, inert, and resting on his staff,  
As one o'erspent with travel ; when at once  
On his rapt senses inspiration burst,  
And rushing to the mountain's verge he cried—

“ From Aram, from the mountains of the east,  
The King of Moab summons me to curse  
Thee, Jacob ! and thee, Israel ! to defy.—  
How shall I curse him, whom God curseth not,  
And how defy whom He hath not defied ?  
Behold, I have receiv'd command to bless :  
From God, the sole, eternal Lord of all,  
Came forth the word ; from the great source of truth,  
Who knows not error, nor repentance needs.  
Hath He not said, and shall He not fulfil ?  
In Jacob God hath not beheld offence ;  
In Israel no perverseness hath He found ;  
But, in His cloudless majesty array'd,

Their ever-present God supreme He reigns :  
His voice is heard amongst them : His right hand  
From their Egyptian bondage set them free.  
I see them from the summit of the rocks,  
Countless in number, matchless in their strength.  
Who shall affront their vengeance? All their foes  
Shall they consume, and utterly destroy :  
Distinct, appropriate empire shall they hold,  
Unnumber'd with the nations, and unmix'd.  
Oh favour'd race, how goodly are thy tents !  
Not more luxuriant spread the winding vales,  
Not more superb the garden's varied pride,  
Less beautiful the clust'ring aloë's bloom,  
And less stupendous the vast cedar's height.  
He, who shall bless thee, shall of God be blest,  
And he, who curseth, be himself accurst.  
Oh ! that my latter end like thine may be,  
Serene in righteousness, confirm'd in hope !—  
But ah ! what wonders burst upon my sight !  
The clouds which veil'd futurity pass off,

And unborn nations crowd upon my view.  
All-pow'rful God ! support me, or I faint !  
Now, now, they rush upon me—now they fade—  
I shall, I shall behold Him, but not now—  
Hereafter shall I see Him, but not nigh—  
A star from out of Jacob shall appear—  
A sceptre out of Israel shall arise—  
Moab's remotest quarters shall it smite,  
And Seth's devoted race shall be destroy'd—  
Captive shall Idumæa's sons be led—  
Esau the yoke of servitude shall bear—  
Where now is Amalek ? His latter end  
Is desolation. He, that once was first  
And mightiest of the nations, is no more—  
Israel shall triumph. Jordan's stream they pass—  
I see them in the promis'd land—they reign—  
They flourish—they decay—Assyria's host  
Invade—assault—defeat—bear them away—  
'Gainst Ashur and the progeny of Shem  
Grecia her conqu'ring armaments sends forth—



O'er vanquish'd realms the Roman eagle soars—  
The nations fall before them. But it fades !—  
It vanishes !—and darkness veils the rest !”

No more he said ; exhausted nature fail'd,  
And breathless, prostrate on the earth he fell.  
Awe-struck, appall'd the King of Moab stood,  
And, on the fallen prophet as he cast  
A melancholy look, “ Alas ! he cried,  
Are these the hopes I foster'd at my heart ?  
Oh, had he neither bless'd nor curs'd at all,  
Better it had been nothing to have known,  
Than, knowing this, to hear myself pre-doom'd  
To disappointment, mis'ry and despair.”

He said, when suddenly a cry was heard,  
And forthwith 'cross the camp a madd'ning crew  
Of augurs, priests and sacrificers rush'd.  
Before them all came one, whose naked flesh  
Was gash'd all o'er with self-inflicted wounds,  
His clotted hair distain'd with dripping blood,  
And his strain'd eyeballs in ecstatic trance

Upturn'd, and glaring on the noon-day sun.

With frantic gesture still as he advanc'd,  
“ To arms, to arms ! the shouting maniac cried,  
To fame, to vict'ry certain and assur'd !  
Moab shall triumph, Basan shall pursue,  
And Amorrhæa's horsemen ride in blood.  
The hour of vengeance is at hand ; the tents  
Of Israel tremble ; Chemos, and the gods  
Associate in his cause have heard our pray'rs,  
And our accepted sacrifice hath drawn  
Propitious omens from their starry spheres.  
See, see, they mount their elemental thrones !  
They arm for battle ! mark what angry fires  
Stream from the worshipt sun, our guardian god,  
Now in his noon of glory ! Hark ! I hear  
The savage howling of the hungry pard ;  
The screaming vulture scents her bloody feast,  
And chides your long delay. Rise, warriors, rise !  
Go forth, and conquer—Chemos leads you on.”

As when sulphureous fires, within the caves

Of earth long pent, with intonation loud  
Burst through the riven rocks, and far as eye  
Can reach their furious devastation spread,  
So sudden, so resistless was the force  
Of this blasphemer's bold appeal to arms.  
No pause was now for calm reflection left ;  
Lost were the words of the prophetic sage,  
And far and wide was heard the thund'ring voice  
Of Basan's king : erect the giant stood,  
High-brandishing his iron-studded mace,  
And gave the word for battle. Balak saw  
That in the madness of the throng all hope  
Of peace was lost, and, as he gave his hand  
To the fall'n seer to raise him from the ground  
“ Father, he cried, thy words are in my heart ;  
And though with awful terror I believe  
All thou hast said shall surely come to pass,  
And to the last word strictly be fulfill'd,  
Yet when these clam'rous zealots shout for war,  
How can my peaceful voice prevail to stay

Infuriate thousands rushing on their death?  
Be witness then that Moab's hapless king  
Is leagu'd with madmen, that controul his will,  
And force his fate upon him. Ah! that Heav'n  
Had made thy voice its oracle in time  
To warn me of my error. Now too late  
I know how vain and hopeless to contend  
With that Almighty Pow'r, which, though of me  
Unworshipt and unknown, yet holds command  
Over thy sapient faculties, and shews  
How impotent to save me are those gods,  
In whom through ignorance I have put my trust.  
Now, if thou can'st, speak comfort to my soul;  
Tell me there yet is hope, for I believe  
Thou hast the words of truth."—To him the seer—

“What I have said I've said not of myself,  
But of the Lord; and neither can I add  
To His decree, or take one word away.  
This only is allow'd. If, as thou say'st,  
Thou dost believe my warning, go not thou

Into the battle. They, that fight, shall fall.  
I can no more. Release me, and farewell !”

He said, and turn'd away : the mournful king  
Attempted not to stay him, but absorb'd  
In solemn musings slowly sought his tent.

Now, whilst our labours gather to an end,  
And little will remain for us to do  
But to repose from our associate task,  
And wait the judgment of the wise and good,  
Who look not for perfection in the works  
Of man, whose happiest efforts never gain'd  
Praise without mixture of offence and blame,  
Here let us pause ; and ere the mournful Muse  
Shall leave her harp upon the cypress boughs,  
That overshadow the meek prophet's corpse  
On Pisgah's summit, let us ask if those,  
Who trace us in th' inspir'd historian's page,  
Will say that faithfully we have detail'd  
Our sacred author : this if we have done,  
And done with that simplicity of style,

Which is our dearest study to attain,  
Who even in this philosophizing age  
Will cavil at a prophecy, that tells  
Through Pagan lips the coming of our Christ?  
Wond'rous indeed the revelation was,  
And such as seems by grace divine ordain'd  
To leave no pause for disputatious man  
To interpose a doubt, when he, who speaks,  
Speaks as th' unwilling witness to the truth,  
Adverse to Israel and to Israel's God.  
What more can heav'nly mercy do for man,  
Than thus to marshal him the way, that leads  
To his salvation; and what less can man  
Do for himself, than follow and be sav'd?  
If such has been the tenor of our song,  
If in our humble verse the wond'rous pow'r,  
And mercies of our God have been disclos'd,  
Whate'er shall be the praise which crowns our work,  
In that consoling thought we may repose.  
And if, when past the time that shall consign

Us and our cares to the oblivious grave,  
If still a kind surviving friend should wish  
To keep some brief memorial of our names,  
This may it be! that as throughout the course  
Of this co-equal work our conscious hearts  
Ne'er form'd one wish for solitary praise,  
So do we hope that after-times may hold  
Our compact undivided and entire,  
And let our friendship be our greatest fame.

END OF BOOK THE SEVENTH.

## BOOK THE EIGHTH AND LAST.

### ARGUMENT.

*THE discomfiture of the Pagan host—The death of Balak—Joshua destroys the Grove of Chemos—Has an interview with Balaam—Chemos, driven to the infernal regions, seeks protection of Satan—Satan contends with the Archangel Michael for the body of Moses—Moses ascends Mount Pisgah—Addresses his last speech to Joshua and the People—Dies—and the Poem concludes.*





# THE EXODIAD.

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## BOOK THE EIGHTH.

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NOW whilst on Abarim the pagan hordes,  
By their false oracles and frantic priests  
Assur'd of vict'ry, snatch'd their weapons up,  
And with the deaf'ning shout for battle drow'd  
The voices of their captains, order reign'd  
Through all the legions of the Lord of Hosts.  
No human victims on their altars bled ;  
No mad enthusiast bar'd his limbs obscene,  
Gash'd o'er with wounds, and utt'ring cries prophane :  
Their worship was the homage of the heart,

Their sacrifice repentance, faith and pray'r ;  
Whilst their meek prophet, circled by the chiefs,  
What best might suit th' eventful time devis'd.  
All was serene and silent. Though prepar'd  
For war, and conscious that ere long their swords  
Must be again unsheath'd, nor fear, nor doubt  
Of Heav'n's protecting Providence assail'd  
Their hearts by witnest miracles confirm'd :  
Such is the confidence, that springs from faith,  
And such the zeal, which pure devotion breathes.

When from the hostile camp loud shouts arose,  
And the rocks echo'd with the barbarous yell,  
Denouncing battle, to the army's front  
Joshua advanc'd. Upon his glitt'ring helm  
The sun-beam play'd ; then instantly outflow  
The lion-standard, signal from the van  
For all the tribes to spread their banners forth :  
Then not a falchion through th' extended line  
Slept in its shell ; no soldier bore a shield,  
That did not echo to th' applauding stroke ;

The archers gave a shout, and twang'd their bows ;  
The leaders militant and princes low'r'd  
Their spears, in homage to their gallant chief.  
Erect and firm he stood : age had not seam'd  
His manly brow, nor bent his graceful form ;  
Quick beat his glowing heart ; joy flush'd his cheek,  
And tears of gratitude bedew'd his eyes :  
Then victory seem'd already in his reach ;  
Then he confess'd and felt a life reserv'd  
For Israel's glory ; the prophetic word  
Of Moses burst on his recording mind,  
And, as he gaz'd on the meridian sun,  
He scarce suppress'd a wish, that now his voice  
Had pow'r to stay him, and prolong the day,  
Till his victorious legions had fulfill'd  
Their heav'n-commission'd duty, and aveng'd  
Th' insulted majesty of Israel's God.

Here as he stood, and bar'd his plumed head,  
Whilst the loud greeting ran from flank to flank,  
The princely leaders of th' embattled tribes

Approach'd ; when Caleb, Judah's gallant chief,  
Pleas'd to be charg'd with greeting so sincere,  
Thus for the whole with zealous ardour spake.

“ Hero, to whom the armies of the Lord  
Give with one heart and voice this joint all-hail,  
Deign to accept our homage ! Thou art he,  
Who we believe art destin'd to expel  
These nations and their idols. Lead us forth  
To battle, mighty chief, if such thy will,  
For we are ready with our blood to seal  
This pledge of our allegiance, and approve  
Our zeal for Israel by obeying thee.”

He said : the leader of the host replied—  
Friends, had I not a heart, that deeply feels  
This general demonstration of your love,  
I were the most insensible of men.  
But you bestow these honours upon one,  
Who knows to prize them, nor can call to mind  
The hour, he would not have resign'd his life,  
Or for his friend, his country, or his God.

Great is my joy, and warmer hopes I draw,  
Than ever yet my kindling bosom felt,  
Of a triumphant day, when I behold  
The orderly arrangement of your tribes,  
Thus under arms awaiting the assault  
Of those tumultuous self-devoted hordes ;  
Army I will not call them, but a mass  
Of congregated madmen, whom their priests,  
Those sacrificers bath'd in human blood,  
With lying divinations have betray'd  
To lodge on those bare rocks, and make their choice  
There to abide and starve, or thence descend,  
And die upon your spears. Moses hath said,  
That he, whom late ye saw with hands uprais'd  
And wild demeanour on the fearful edge  
Of the steep mount that overhangs your camp,  
Was Balaam, son of Beor : from beside  
The banks of far Euphrates he was call'd  
By Moab's king to work his magic spells,  
And curse the host of Israel ; but the Lord

Was mindful of his people, and dispos'd  
His heart to bless us—and we shall be blest.  
Then spake the seer of wond'rous things to come,  
And as the flood of inspiration rush'd  
On his enraptur'd soul, revealing scenes  
Of distant dark futurity, his strain,  
Bold, energetic, cloath'd in words of fire,  
Proclaim'd redemption purchas'd for mankind  
By a new prophet, sprung from Abram's stock,  
As man to suffer, and as God to save.  
Thus I recite to you what Moses told;  
And this inspir'd Diviner on the cliff  
Ye saw, and heard at intervals his voice  
In accents supernatural pronounce  
Th' involuntary blessing on your host.  
Now then, associates, ye behold the day,  
The day of glorious triumph for the Lord.  
What have the armies of our God to fear,  
When thus a Pagan, by his pow'r compell'd,  
Unravels his oracular decrees,

And e'en the demons tremble and believe?"

Thus as he spake, the venerable form  
Of Israel's aged prophet struck his sight :  
Him when the leaders of the tribes perceiv'd,  
No longer circling round their chief they throng'd,  
But parting outwards stood in rank behind,  
And reverently waited his approach.  
No longer now majestic and erect,  
But bow'd with years, and resting on the arms  
Of his attendant ministers he came.  
Yet was his eye not dimm'd ; though twenty years  
Of his now second century had roll'd  
Their winters o'er his head, still his firm mind,  
Strong as at first, and conscious of its claim  
To immortality, felt no decay,  
And knew the greedy grave could only take  
A wreck, no longer worthy of its care.

Silent the princes stood : the seer approach'd,  
When, after pause for breath, with look benign  
And courteous salutation, thus he spake.



“ Praise to the God of Israel ! who permits  
His aged servant to behold this day,  
When to thy charge, O Joshua, well-belov’d,  
I render up my duties and my cares.  
Short will be now the ev’ning of my day ;  
For night draws on : yet shall I live to see  
A second generation reap the fruit  
Of that rich promise, which their fathers lost,  
For whom so long I importun’d the Lord,  
That my solicitude became my sin :  
For I had brought them out from Gōshen’s land,  
And though I had no better rest to give,  
Save in the desert, yet I set them free :  
They murmur’d and rebell’d against the God,  
Who fed their hunger and assuag’d their thirst :  
’Twas dire ingratitude ; yet I, alas !  
Weak man, had pity even for their crimes ;  
And therefore never shall I set my foot  
In that fair land, which lies beyond the stream,  
That westward rolls its waters in my view.

But whither am I wand'ring? Ah, my friends,  
My children, 'tis th' infirmity of age  
To talk, when duty urges us to act.  
The foe prepares for battle. Ye must fight,  
And, fighting, ye shall conquer; for the Lord,  
The Lord hath said it: not by me He speaks,  
For I am past—in other tones than mine  
He vents his oracles, from Pagan lips  
The glorious revelation he extorts,  
Gives you dominion over Canaan's kings,  
And makes the pow'rs of hell attest his gift.  
Let then your courage as your faith be firm;  
Stand fast and fear not! As a fragment huge,  
From the tall summit of a mountain torn,  
Falls headlong, so from these impending heights,  
Gath'ring at ev'ry steep augmented speed,  
Will your foe come. Receive him on your spears!"  
Scarce had he ended, when from Pisgah's mount  
Loud burst the din of battle; down its sides  
Th' impetuous legions of the foe came on,

And pour'd upon the plain. On Judah first,  
By zeal idolatrous inflam'd, with yells  
And execrations dissonant and shrill,  
Their furious charge they made. Compact and firm  
Them on their sturdy spears, in order rang'd,  
Judah's brave sons receiv'd ; whilst from the rear  
A show'r of darts with destination sure  
Pour'd on their crowded line. As when the winds  
'Tear up old ocean's bed, and from its depth  
Unfathomable lift the briny flood,  
High mount the foaming billows, wave on wave  
Lashes the sounding shore ; so with attack  
Incessantly renew'd came on the foe.  
Then foremost ever in the bleeding field,  
And breathing loud defiance, Basan's king  
Levell'd the ranks of war ; like bending grass  
Before the sturdy mower's scythe they fell  
Under his pond'rous mace : o'er heaps of dead  
The tow'ring portent strode, till the wing'd death  
From hand ignoble flew, and stopp'd his course :

Nor mail, nor shield, though vast, oppos'd the stroke ;  
Between his armour's chinks the barbed shaft  
Pass'd, and transfix'd his heart : prone to the earth,  
And dead at once, the cumbrous giant fell ;  
A mass enormous, from his spouting wound  
Floating the field with gore. Their hero slain,  
Loud was the cry ; fear sate on every face  
Ghastly and pale. Then Amorrhæa's king  
Inglorious wheel'd his fleet Arabian steed ;  
When, as he turn'd to flight, a jav'lin, hurl'd  
By some strong arm, o'ertook him in his speed ;  
Through his rent mail, with gold and gems begirt,  
The well-aim'd weapon forc'd its fatal way,  
And laid him writhing in the dust, unhors'd, .  
Forsaken, trampled under foot, a corpse  
To sight now terrible, erewhile a king,  
Before whose presence thousands veil'd their eyes,  
So bright his splendor and so proud his state.

Then panic terror reign'd ; wide o'er the field  
The routed pagans spread : to rocks and caves,

To their dumb idols and defenceless groves,  
Invoking their false gods, they took their flight :  
But them a storm impetuous had dispers'd  
To the far-distant north, there to abide  
In darkness and bewail their blasted hopes :  
For now the supplication, humbly breath'd  
By Israel's seer, had reach'd the throne of heav'n ;  
The wrath of the Almighty had gone forth,  
Nor ceas'd the sword from slaughter, till the sun  
Rayless went down upon the field of blood.  
This when the chief of Israel saw, amaz'd  
He view'd the wild confusion, and exclaim'd—  
“ Not ours, O Lord, this vict'ry. ' Man from man,  
Since war was known on earth, yet never fled  
As these, thine enemies, now fly from us :  
Therefore be thine the glory, thine the praise,  
Whilst we, thy creatures, wonder and adore.”

Balak the whilst, who on the mountain's brow,  
Disconsolate and from the fight apart,  
Had stood contemplating the fatal scene,

Now turn'd aside, and thus lamenting spake.

“ Ah sage Chaldæan, truly hast thou said,  
The gods I serv'd deceive me ; Moab falls,  
And Israel triumphs. I have seen enough.  
What is my life, and whither can I fly ?  
A man's own spirit will suffice to bear  
The malice of his fortune, and if chance,  
That only robs him of his triumph, leave  
His conscious sense of honour unimpair'd,  
The mind draws consolation from itself ;  
But when the soul is vanquish'd, all is lost.  
The King of Basan against Israel fought,  
I against Israel's God : he dies in arms ;  
I, arm'd with curses only, shunn'd the fight,  
And lurk'd in clefts and hollows of the rock,  
Whilst Balaam's awful voice, as with a spell,  
Bound all my senses up, and fix'd me here  
To witness horrors, which too plainly show  
I am a wretch beyond redemption lost.  
Where is my refuge ? Not to Moab's land,

Where I was monarch of a peopled realm,  
And reign'd in splendor, will I now return  
To dwell in desolation and disgrace,  
Pursu'd and baited by the piercing cries  
Of widows and of orphans. So to be,  
Weré but to purchase being with the loss  
And forfeiture of all for which we live.  
To Chemos shall I fly—to yonder grove,  
Where his great tutelary image stands?  
And shall I kneel to that, and kneeling cry,  
O Chemos, hear me! To these rocks as soon;  
For the dumb earth, on which I tread, shall speak  
And utter forth a voice, or ere my pray'r  
Shall enter the impenetrable stone,  
Of which that idol deity is form'd.  
If there be that, which answers to the name  
Of Chemos, spirit it can never be  
Of heav'nly mould, but hell-born and abhorr'd  
Of Israel's God, who is the only Lord  
And ruler of the fates of all mankind.

What then remains ? Extinction is the doom  
Of me and Moab : Moab is no more ;  
Here on the summit of this rock I stood,  
And witness'd the extinction of my hope ;  
Be this the period then of my despair !”

He said, and, rushing to the giddy edge  
Of the tremendous promontory, check'd  
His desperate speed an instant, and exclaim'd—  
“ Thou God of Israel, whom I would have curs'd,  
Let this atone !” then plung'd into the gulph  
Unfathomable, and was seen no more.

Now when the chief of Israel had recall'd  
His legions from pursuit, he led them on  
Clear from the tainted field, and by the banks  
Of the slow-winding Jordan spread his camp  
In the pure vale, by gentle breezes fann'd.  
The ev'ning trump with lulling note announc'd  
The welcome hour of rest, and drowsy night  
Cast her soft mantle o'er the weary host.  
Still the destroying angel unrecall'd



Kept weary watch, and hover'd on the wing.  
Still death, with carnage glutted, sate enthron'd  
In awful silence on th' unburied pile  
Of bleeding carcasses, his ghastly prey :  
The rav'ning vulture and night-prowling dog  
Instinctive horror felt, nor dar'd approach  
The shadowy terror : all the air was still.

At length morn's early centinel came forth,  
And from before heav'n's eastern gate withdrew  
Night's sable veil, and call'd the breezes up  
To chase the sluggish damps, that else had clogg'd  
The chariot wheels of the uprising sun.  
Then from the hallow'd spot, where central stood  
The sacred Ark of God, th' attendant priests  
Gave their loud trumpets breath ; at sound whereof  
The elders and the princes of the tribes,  
Civil and militant, as their degrees  
And due precedencies gave right and place,  
Assembling waited to receive the word  
Of their great oracle, and know his will :

Nor long was their suspense, for now behold !  
The aged prophet came : he to the ark  
With meek obeisance bow'd his hoary head,  
Then, turning to the congregation, thus he spake.

“ Children, ye see when God puts forth his hand  
How feeble and how frail a thing is man.  
Say not within your hearts—‘ It is our arm  
Hath overthrown the nations ;’ rather say—  
Let the Heav’n’s hear, and let the earth be still,  
Whilst we ascribe dominion to the Lord,  
Judgment and pow’r and majesty and truth !  
Ye saw how yesterday the giant host  
Of Basan fled, like chaff before the wind.  
What people can compare with them in strength ?  
’Twas not from you they fled, but from the Lord.  
Earth trembled, and the everlasting rocks  
Shook to their deep foundations, when the breath  
Of God’s displeasure blasted all their strength,  
Laid their ranks prostrate, brake their chariot wheels,  
And pil’d the field with mountains of their slain.

Why were they scatter'd thus, and made afraid  
When no fear was ? For their profane misdeeds,  
For their abominations, and because  
They sacrific'd to devils, not to God,  
This fiery wrath was kindled to consume  
The earth with her increase : not to reward  
Your righteousness, but to chastise their sin,  
This evil hath come on them. Tell me now,  
How should one chase a thousand ; how from two  
Ten thousand turn to flight, had not their hearts  
Been sever'd from the Lord, who was their rock,  
And sold to idol gods, unknown and strange,  
Of whom there is no record save in hell ?  
Where are their gods to save them ? Where is now  
This boasted rock, in whom they put their trust ?  
The vine of Sodom is their vine ; the grapes  
That grow in their Gomorrah, are of gall,  
And from the wine-press give a drink as dire  
And mortal as the venom of the asp.  
They gave the day to feasting : it is past,

And a long night of sorrow now succeeds.  
Where will they fly for succour and defence ?  
Will Chemos now, or he, to whom they made  
Horrid libations of their children's blood,  
Moloch, the homicidal fiend, arise,  
And wrest them from th' almighty hand of God ?  
Nor he, nor Chemos. Therefore hear me now,  
Thou in thy present occupation great,  
Greater in that, which shall hereafter be,  
Leader and judge of Israel ! in thy strength,  
With Caleb and with Judah's tribe ascend  
The mountain-top, where Moab, in his zeal  
To curse the armies of the living Lord,  
To Chemos, his abomination, rear'd  
Altars profane, and with unhallow'd clouds  
Of incense, steaming from the fragrant shrine,  
Greeted his senseless idol, and renounc'd  
The one eternal power, his father's God :  
Break down his images, destroy his groves,  
And from the heights of Abarim display

Your fires, a beacon to the Gentile world."

The prophet ceas'd ; the chieftain gave the word,  
And instantly Jephunneh's martial son  
Drew forth the strength of Judah : up the steep  
The chosen phalanx march'd. The foe had fled :  
Silence and solitude now reign'd around ;  
Nor was it long ere they descried the grove,  
Where, in mid space of the inclosed plain,  
Stood the proud shrine of Moab's solar god :  
The guards, who minister'd the sacred fires,  
Perpetual deem'd, had left them to exhale.  
Beneath the shade of a wide-spreading oak,  
Propp'd on his staff, a solitary man,  
His white locks spreading o'er his azure vest,  
Stood, as if nought external could disturb  
His meditations, or inspire alarm.  
Him Joshua spied, and curious to enquire  
Why he alone of all the routed crew  
Of idol worshippers disdain'd escape,  
Approach'd, and thus address'd the hoary sage.

“ What and whence art thou, desperate old man,  
Who in this grove, proscribed and accurst,  
For which our fires are even now prepar'd,  
Dar'st to provoke the doom, that all must meet,  
Who have defied the vengeance of our God,  
Of heav'n and earth the maker and the Lord ?”

“ As such I witness him, the sage replied,  
And upwards cast his eyes and rais'd his hands  
Adoring—Israel's God is Lord of all.  
From the far mountains of the east I came,  
As by his spirit prompted, to attest  
His mighty acts past, present and to come.  
I am the son of Beor. Thee I know—  
Joshua, the scourge of Canaan and her kings,  
Whom I have sev'n times bless'd, and blest thou art.  
Hast thou not heard of Balaam ?—I am he.  
By the Chaldean sages I was taught  
To sound those mazy depths, where science hides  
Her sacred mysteries from the gaze of men :  
My dwelling was the rock beside the stream

Of fam'd Euphrates ; over head the oak  
And spreading cedar from their boughs let fall  
The weak and trailing ivy, that entwin'd  
And wove itself about my silent cell :  
Thence on the constellated vault of Heav'n  
Gazing long time with patient mind intent,  
I trac'd the symbols of the starry zone,  
And pluck'd her secrets from the conscious moon.  
Nor is this all ; so potent was my art,  
Into the world of spirits I essay'd  
Advent'rous inroad, and communion held  
With demons ministerial to my power :  
In air, on earth and in the depths beneath  
They wrought my biddings ; throughout all the east  
My fame was bruited ; great was the resort  
For spells and divinations. By the king  
Of Moab twice solicited to curse  
The people of the Lord, at length I came ;  
But not to work his purpose did I come :  
The God of Israel sent his angel down,

And what he put into my heart to speak,  
That I deliver'd truly ; but in vain :  
They heeded not those oracles divine,  
But lent their faith to their blaspheming priests,  
And fought and perish'd in their unbelief.  
On the hill-top I stood, and saw their host  
Fly like the dust from underneath the feet  
Of your victorious files. I, having done  
And said what He, the infinite in pow'r,  
Will'd me to do and say, believ'd that now,  
Discharg'd of my commission, I might turn  
My face to travel homewards, when I heard  
The voice of one, who call'd me by my name,  
Bidding me enter and behold the doom  
Of this polluted grove. Accosted thus,  
I hasted to obey the voice divine,  
And here beneath this venerable oak,  
Not willing further to advance my steps  
Over the soil accurst, I took my post,  
And stood, nor rais'd my eyes, till over-head



The shriek, as of a spirit in the air,  
Smote on mine ear ; when looking up I saw  
Chemos, the worshipt demon of the grove,  
Caught in a fiery whirlwind, and driv'n on  
Far to the north, till, lessening by degrees,  
He faded, sunk and melted into air.

The trumpet then gave note of thy approach :  
Thou cam'st ; I knew thee for the army's chief :  
'Twas not alone thy lion-crested helm,  
And noble port, that witness'd high command ;  
It was that inspiration, which so late  
Had swell'd and bourgeon'd in my glowing breast,  
That mark'd thee for the chosen of the Lord,  
Destin'd to high exploits. And now behold !  
I am thy servant : let me know thy will,  
For all that Moses is soon thou shalt be."

This said, the chief with mild and gracious look,  
From his high state descending, bow'd his head  
To the time-honour'd sage, and thus replied.

" Prophet, we know the spirit is of God,

Which led thee hither, and which holds thee here ;  
And grace forbid that Joshua should conceive  
A thought to harm thee : sacred and secure,  
Of Heav'n so privileg'd, thou needs must be.  
The voice, that call'd thee, and the fiery fiend,  
Unseen of others, but to thee reveal'd,  
Assure me that the labour of thy thoughts,  
Redeem'd from error, hath obtain'd of God  
Grace and permission to confess this truth,  
Attest his wonders and proclaim his will.  
Therefore it more behoveth me to learn  
Thy pleasure, than that thou should'st ask of mine.  
The favour and adoption, thou hast gain'd  
In Israel, use as reason may direct,  
Or inspiration rule. Would'st thou behold  
What Jacob's God by Moses hath decreed,  
Stand at my side the whilst our fires consume  
This grove, these altars and the shrine profane  
Of that now exil'd demon, whom thou saw'st  
Caught up and plunging in the furious blast

Down to the habitations of the damn'd,  
To dwell with darkness."—Here the chieftain paus'd ;  
For now the conflagration had begun.  
Climbing the verdant fence the serpent flames  
Hiss'd in the dewy air : all Israel saw  
The blazing ruin ; Jordan's silver flood  
From its smooth surface threw reflected gleams,  
And to the frightened herds, that graz'd its banks,  
Shew'd like a stream of fire : the scatter'd hordes,  
That fled the battle, spiritless, aghast,  
Look'd back, and Canaan doubted of her gods.

Now to the dismal and obscure abyss,  
By earth call'd hell, by heav'n the place reserv'd,  
Where Satan o'er his fallen angels reigns  
In the profound of uncreated night,  
Chemos, no longer on the blast up-borne,  
Headlong with dire precipitation fell,  
And at the footstool of th' enthroned Sin,  
His king infernal, lay a hideous wreck,  
Stretcht on the solid sulphur : his fine form,

Cast in ethereal mould, and perfect once  
In grace angelic, to th' appalled eye  
Of hell's great sultan seem'd a shapeless mass :  
Still on his shatter'd wings and rivell'd locks,  
That when in heav'n with roscate brightness shone,  
The unquencht lightning prey'd. At length, half-rais'd,  
He turn'd his ghastly eyes where Satan sat  
In clouded majesty, and sighing cried—  
“ Ah, why is death, all living nature's friend,  
Giv'n as the period of his pain to man,  
And yet to me refus'd, who roll in fires,  
Which, to endure one moment, might atone  
For all th' offences I have done on earth  
Since I lost Heav'n? Oh, give me but exchange  
Of agonies, Omnipotence severe!  
And whelm me underneath the icy rocks,  
That strike their roots into the polar sea,  
So I may quench these arrows. Mighty lord !  
Son of the morning once, whose radiant sphere,  
Exalted high above th' angelic thrones,

Dazzled the seraphim, and caus'd them wage  
Ambitious war with Heav'n's eternal king,  
Succour thy servant, who for thee hath held  
Vicarious empire over Moab's realm,  
Fairest of lands, whose fuming altars breath'd  
Incense so sweet, methought I still inhal'd  
Celestial odours, and almost forgot  
That I was reft of heav'n, till Moses wav'd  
His wizzard rod, and Joshua couch'd his spear,  
And the foul raven of Chaldæa croak'd  
His death-denouncing knell: then, then I saw  
Spell-stricken Moab turn to shameful flight,  
Then Amorrhæa's king ignobly died,  
Whilst from his iron chariot down at once  
Basan's gigantic champion fell, and roll'd  
His laurel-crowned temples in the dust;  
Then Jacob's ruthless sons, with slaughter flusht,  
Tore down my altars, burnt my sacred grove,  
And from the heights of Abarim display'd  
The vengeful trophies of their conqu'ring God.

For me there needs no witness : these deep scars  
Are pledges of my loyalty, and prove  
The pow'r, that vanquish'd Moab, spar'd not me.  
And now let Baal, and let Moloch judge,  
(They stand beside thee) from my piteous state  
What mercy is reserv'd for Canaan's gods."

"Talk not of mercy, Satan frowning cried ;  
He, that commands the heav'ns, affects it not,  
And we, who reign in hell, nor deign to ask,  
Nor study to deserve it. We have warr'd  
With Him, who wields the thunder, and 'twere vain,  
'Twere profitless to murmur at the stroke :  
If He, who chains the whirlwinds, let them loose  
To hunt us through th' interminable void,  
We meet them as we may. Had we those arms,  
We should not spare to use them : in our ears,  
As now in his, mercy would lose her suit.  
No more of mercy then ! In God tow'rds us  
'Twould cease to be a virtue, and in us,  
Here fated to associate with the damn'd,

'Twould be an attribute unworthy hell.  
Know then, desponding cherub, when you call  
On me to save you, you appeal to one,  
Who could not save himself; when you confess  
Yourself tormented, your tormentor smiles;  
But when you sigh for death, you sure forget  
That I, who thwarted the creator's work,  
And taught the first-form'd pair to disobey,  
Sent that abhorr'd anatomy on earth,  
And made him the sole property of man;  
Whilst angel spirits, like myself and thee,  
Immortal reign'd ere he receiv'd a name:  
And thou shalt reign; therefore cast off despair:  
The courage, that defies the stronger pow'r,  
Must brave the pains its conqu'ror may inflict:  
It is our doom to suffer, and this place  
Was not allotted to us for repose.  
Arise, and stand!"—He said, and at the word,  
Moloch and Baal, mighty spirits both,  
Rais'd him from earth; he stood: when Satan thus.

“ Did I not tell thee to renounce despair ?  
Chemos, awake ! where is thy boasted pow’r  
Of divination ? Hadst thou not a name,  
Greater than all the oracles on earth,  
For knowledge of things future ? What hath dull’d  
Thy spirit ? Prophet, needst thou to be told  
All is not lost ? Long ages must succeed  
To ages, ere the contest shall be clos’d  
’Twixt God and Satan. I have sown too deep  
The evil seed to be pluckt up in haste ;  
And when the last hand shall complete that work,  
All things shall change, and time shall be no more.  
Meanwhile invention shall be wearied out,  
To find new titles for a herd of fiends :  
Men shall run wild, and slight the only God  
To deify corruption, and persuade  
Wretches, whose ignorance hath dark’ned earth,  
To graft their names upon the stars of heav’n :  
Nay, they shall bend the knee to stocks and stones,  
To reptiles vile, to birds and grazing beasts,



And monsters of their rivers and their lakes.  
Then shall the world behold a wond'rous thing—  
A star shall rise ; a babe of virgin born—  
A God incarnate shall consort with men,  
And death, whom I begat, shall hurl his dart  
At immortality, and for a time  
Robe the whole heav'n in mourning black as night.  
Now learn this also. Ere the hours shall pass,  
That serve to measure out a day to men,  
On Pisgah's summit Moses shall expire.  
Greater than him there hath not liv'd on earth,  
Since the first man had being. Sure I am,  
God will send down his angel high in trust  
To rescue his corruption from the grave :  
There I and Michael once again shall meet ;  
For that encounter I must now prepare."

He said, and as the pillar'd sand, caught up  
By eddying whirlwind from the Libyan waste,  
Mounts to the clouds, so Satan, as he rear'd  
His arch-angelic stature, tow'ring swell'd,

Till with expanded wings, as Atlas tall,  
In adamantine panoply he stood  
Terrific : hell rebellow'd with the shout  
Of his applauding satellites ; the lake,  
That roll'd its sulph'rous billows round his throne,  
Burst into flames, that bright'ning as he soar'd  
Emergent, gave his mighty form to view.

Michael the whilst, alighting on the top  
Of Pisgah, there by God's supreme command  
Kept his appointed ward ; thence, as his eye  
Rang'd the horizon, floating in the north  
A speck, to none but angel-vision clear,  
Quick-glancing he espied : onward it came,  
Expanding in its course ; and well he knew,  
That other spirit than Hell's mighty lord  
Dar'd not approach with that presumptuous speed,  
As if to seize his post : whereat with voice,  
That stay'd him in his flight, aloud he cried—

“ What ails thee, Satan, to attempt surprise  
Where I am station'd ? On this spot proscrib'd

Descend not at thy peril ! thou art warn'd :  
Hover not here, nor bend thine eyes on me,  
Who fear thee not ; but hell-ward speed thy flight.\*

To him the arch-enemy of God and man,  
Pois'd on the wing, in vaunting tone replied—  
“ Inglorious spirit, if it were my will  
To plant my foot potential on this spot,  
Or any other that the broad earth owns,  
Thy menace would not stay me, nor prevent  
That I should lift this mountain from its base,  
Though thou and all the minstrelsy of heav'n  
Were hymning hallelujahs on its top,  
And in mid ocean whelm it.”—“ Cease thy vaunts,  
Spirit unblest ! the patient virtue cried ;  
Time was, (and cause thou hast to rue that time),  
When this avenging sword, which now I wield,  
Clove with resistless force thy radiant form,  
With arch-angelic energy endow'd.  
And hop'st thou, when commission'd here I stand,  
To guard the sacred spot whereon this day

The prophet of the Lord shall yield his breath,  
That thou, or all the banded host of hell,  
Shall mar the purpose pre-ordain'd of Him,  
Whose minister I am?"—" 'Tis well thou art,  
Satan replied ; office like that besecms  
A mean, degenerate spirit, such as thine :  
It fits thee well, accustom'd as thou art  
To passive base submission, thus to quit  
Thy heav'nly principality and throne,  
Here to become a centinel, to watch  
Th' expiring sigh of Moses, and attend  
His lifeless corpse. Oh ! 'tis a princely task,  
A post, which none but spirits like thyself,  
May envy or may emulate. For me,  
(No delegated servant, but the lord  
Of realms far spreading which confess my sway)  
Here on this spot, where, as it seems, thou stand'st  
To watch the corpse of Moses, Satan, I,  
Come to contest it with thee."—On the word,  
Arm'd for the conflict, he prepar'd to make

Hostile descent upon the sacred soil.

“ The Lord rebuke thee, Satan, for thy pride !  
Avaunt !” th’ archangel said, and rear’d aloft  
His flaming sword ; and, as he wav’d it round,  
From ev’ry quarter of the sky burst forth  
The elemental fires. In sulph’rous clouds  
Involv’d, the thunder-smitten demon fled,  
And sunk desponding to th’ infernal pit.

The sun was verging to the western main,  
And ev’ning zephyrs with their cooling wings  
Fann’d the clear air on Pisgah’s lofty brow,  
When now the Levites, from the vale below,  
Up the high stéep hād borne their aged seer,  
And gain’d the summit. On the topmost peak,  
High above all the interjacent hills,  
The conscious legate of Jehovah took  
His station, and by heav’n endow’d with strength,  
Proportion’d to his purpose, stood apart,  
Nor needed man’s support. Distinct and clear,  
In long perspective to th’ horizon’s verge,

The camp of Israel, Jordan's winding stream,  
And the whole circuit of the promis'd land,  
Burst on his sight ; for in the pow'r of God,  
The great archangel, watching at his side,  
Had with celestial touch dispell'd the mist,  
Which else had clouded objects so remote.  
Pond'ring in thought anticipant the scene  
Of Israel's triumphs, and that here, redeem'd  
From bondage, they might dwell in cities built  
By other nations, and for them reserv'd  
By their providing God, the prophet stood  
And gaz'd delighted ; holy rapture seiz'd  
His swelling heart, and, as he turn'd aside  
To his attendant ministers, he said—

“ Lead me to yonder plain where Joshua stands,  
And with the chiefs and elders of the tribes  
Awaits my coming ; for I feel a hand,  
That warns me thither, and arrested holds  
The stroke of death, till I shall breathe a pray'r  
For my beloved people, and expire.”

He said, and turn'd his face, as if to seek  
Th' assembled princes. This when Joshua saw,  
“ Behold, he cried, the aged prophet comes ;  
The dying father comes to bless his sons :  
Prevent the labour of his steps, my friends,  
And hasten to receive his last commands.”

No more ; the chief, with Caleb ever prompt  
To pay obedience to his leader's call,  
Advanc'd, nor did the princes of the tribes  
Delay to follow : upon sight whereof,  
In the mid space the pious prophet stopp'd,  
And rais'd his eyes to heav'n, and, for he knew  
How near his portion in this mortal life  
Was drawing to its end, devoutly pray'd  
That God would strengthen him to meet the hour  
Of dissolution with a constant mind.  
The pray'r was heard ; the aged supplicant  
Was not forgotten of his gracious Lord.  
And now the princely company approach'd,  
With Joshua and with Caleb in their front,

And, having jointly paid obeisance due,  
Respectful silence kept. He with a smile,  
That spoke their welcome, meekly bow'd his head,  
And in an accent so divinely mild,  
As might have grac'd a cherub, when he comes  
Upon the wings of mercy to assure  
The penitent of pardon, thus he spake.

“ Children ! behold I come, as servant should,  
With humble acquiescence to receive  
Gracious dismissal from the Lord my God,  
Who now hath number'd out my days on earth,  
And, giving me to know my latter end,  
Calls me away in his pre-destin'd time.  
I murmur not, for I am full of years,  
And willingly resign a toilsome life,  
When He, who gave me labour, gives me rest.  
I have not borrow'd of the public spoil ;  
Not for myself I've liv'd ; when I am dead,  
Search and examine if or ox or ass  
Or aught unjustly taken rests with me :



The servant of your God is now as bare  
Of worldly substance, and as clean of hand,  
As Jethro's shepherd was. I have no part :  
'Tis yours to enter Canaan and possess ;  
I must stand here aloof, and with mine eyes  
Range o'er the land from Gilead unto Dan ;  
All Ephraim and Manasseh and the realm  
Of Judah, stretching to the utmost sea,  
With Naphtali were giv'n me to behold :  
I turn'd me to the south, and saw the plain  
Of Jericho, low seated in the vale ;  
The city of the palm trees was display'd,  
And unto Zoar my horizon stretch'd.  
The Lord had said unto me—' Thou shalt see  
The land of promise, which I sware to give  
To Abraham thy father and his seed ;  
But thou shalt not go over.'—To my God  
What could I answer ? Humbly I receiv'd  
The awful interdiction, and behold !  
My portion is the spot on which I tread ;

Here ends my travel: death awaits me here.  
Of nothing I will boast; 'twould ill become  
God's servant, once the lowliest of the low,  
To arrogate his glories to himself:  
Yet, from the hour I brought your fathers forth  
From Pharaoh's bondage even until now,  
I've borne my office meckly, though not well;  
For that weak pity, which a parent feels  
For an offending son, I felt for them:  
Therefore the great commission to transport  
The sacred tabernacle of our God  
Into the land of promise, whilst the stream  
Of Jordan shall roll back to let it pass,  
Justly of me is forfeited, and giv'n  
To worthier than myself—Joshua, to thee,  
To thee, in whom all Israel shall behold  
Her legislator, leader and her judge.  
And now, O nation, blessed shalt thou be  
In every work, and in thy body's fruit,  
Thy cattle and thy land, with plenty crown'd,

So thou wilt faithfully observe to keep  
The statutes in the volume of the law,  
Which I have this day lodg'd within the ark.  
'Tis not conceal'd ; thou hast not far to seek ;  
'Tis not in heav'n above, that thou should'st say,  
Who will ascend and bring it down on earth ?  
'Tis not beyond the sea, that thou should'st ask  
If any will attempt the distant search :  
There needs no voyager to fetch that home,  
Which hath not stirr'd abroad ; no flight to heav'n  
For what is in thine hand and in thine heart.  
Therefore this day I tender to thy choice,  
Life with all good, or death with all things ill.  
Have I not warn'd thee o'er and o'er, and now  
Again conjure thee with my dying breath,  
To love, obey and serve the Lord thy God ?  
So shalt thou prosper, so shalt thou enjoy  
A peaceful tenure in the happy land,  
Which thou art now preparing to possess.  
But mark me, Israel, if thine heart revolt,

And turn aside to other gods than Him,  
Who is at once thy life and length of days;  
Bear witness for me, heav'n and earth, thy doom  
Shall be to perish : thou shalt not prolong.  
Thy days upon the land, but it shall be  
A land of desolation and of plagues  
To thee and to thy children. I have said ;  
And now no more : this earthly scene is pass'd ;  
The strength, which God inspir'd, is spent and gone,  
And I, to whom the world's Creator told  
His sev'n-days work, must render up my breath :  
My ministry is finish'd ; in thine hands,  
Blest of the Lord, O Joshua ! I have put  
The book of life, and in thine arms expire."

He ceas'd, and instantly the hand of death  
Press'd on his heart and stopp'd its vital pulse ;  
His eye-lids dropt upon their sightless balls :  
One deep-drawn sigh dismiss'd his parting soul ;  
To heav'n it rose ; his body sunk to earth,  
And God's archangel guarded his remains.

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